

# ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE COMMUNITY 2023-2024



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# ABOUT SAN DIEGO MIRAMAR COLLEGE

## SAN DIEGO MIRAMAR COLLEGE

One of three credit colleges within the San Diego Community College District, San Diego Miramar College offers associate degrees, certificates of completion, and the first two years of a bachelor's degree. Founded in 1969, and located in Mira Mesa, the college services 16,000 students annually with 42 programs that offer 75 associate degrees and 97 career technical education certificates.

Partnerships with local industry and the City and County of San Diego prepare students for high demand and well-paying careers in the highly competitive labor market, including biotechnology, paralegal (ABA approved), aviation (FAA-certified), automotive, diesel and advanced transportation and energies. Miramar College is home to the Southern California Biotechnology Center, Advanced Transportation and Energy Center and the San Diego Regional Public Safety Institute, which comprises the San Diego Law Enforcement Academy and the Fire Technology & EMT program. Since 1969, the college has provided training for nearly all law enforcement and firefighters in San Diego County. Miramar College is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) through 2031.



Dr. Wesley Lundburg  
2024 DSPS Celebration

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# P. Wesley Lundburg, Ph.D.

I am pleased to share with you this Report to the Community and some highlights from the 2023-2024 academic year.

It was another year of growth and success for us here at San Diego Miramar College. Early in the academic year, we were greeted with the news that our application to offer our first ever baccalaureate degree was approved by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's office. Beginning fall of 2025, Miramar College will offer a Bachelor's of Science degree in Public Safety Management. This degree will align perfectly with our already robust Regional Public Safety Training Institute which educates most of San Diego's First Responders. Now these brave men and women, along with countless aspiring First Responders, will be able to take their education to the next level.

In June, at its annual meeting, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), the regional accrediting agency that evaluates two-year colleges in California, took action to reaffirm San Diego Miramar College's accreditation for seven years through 2031. I am grateful to our faculty and staff who continue to do great work on behalf of our students and the community at-large.

In athletics, the College received approval from the San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees to add three intercollegiate sports to its athletic department. Men's soccer, men's swimming and women's swimming will begin competition during the 2024-2025 calendar year. The additions of those three sports brings our total intercollegiate sports programs to ten.

And finally, what I am most proud of is what the students accomplished in the classroom. Our degree and certification completion numbers improved greatly over the previous year.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, Miramar College conferred 1,194 degrees and another 705 Certificate of Achievements for a total of 1,899 awards.

Of the 1,194 associate degrees to be conferred, 522, or 44%, are Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), thus demonstrating that Miramar College will have prepared nearly half its degree earning students for transfer to a 4-year university.

What a year! We can't wait to get started on the next!

Sincerely,

Dr. Wesley Lundburg, President, San Diego Miramar College

## Mission Statement

San Diego Miramar College's mission is to prepare students to succeed by providing quality instruction and services in an environment that supports and promotes success, diversity, inclusion, and equity with innovative programs and partnerships to facilitate student completion for degrees/certificates, transfer, workforce training, and/or career advancement.

## Vision Statement

San Diego Miramar College will be the center of education innovation, and services to support our diverse students and community.

San Diego Miramar College, in keeping with this vision, supports and emphasizes the following guiding values:

- Access to learning and support services, for all students to successfully achieve their educational and career goals.
- A culture that embraces and promotes equity, inclusion, civility, responsibility, sustainability, from a global perspective.
- Diversity, equity, inclusion and success of our students, classified professionals, faculty, administrators, and programs that reflect our community.
- Creativity, innovation, flexibility, and excellence in teaching, learning, and services.
- The ability to recognize and respond to opportunities and challenges emerging from a complex and dynamic world.
- Strategic resource and partnership development to support curriculum and program innovation.
- Collaboration and partnerships.
- Effective participation in governance with respect and professionalism, through intentional, purposeful and effective communication embraced by the college community.
- Transformative processes that include a culture of evidence, collaborative inquiry, and action for promoting student success.





Lucy Gates  
Head Coach



Bennett Bugelli  
Coach



Evan Dean  
Coach

## ATHLETIC SPOTLIGHT

# The Amazin' Jets

Nineteen-sixty-nine was a memorable year in New York City baseball folklore. The New York Mets won a World Series Championship just a year removed from an 89-loss season. As a result of that dramatic turnaround, the hometown 9 has come to be affectionately known as the "Amazin' Mets."

Six decades later, the 2023 version of the Miramar College women's water polo team can call themselves the "Amazin' Jets!" No, they didn't rebound from losing 89 games the year prior, because they weren't even in existence the year prior. One year after the program went on hiatus, the "Amazin' Jets" returned to the pool to win the PCAC conference title for the first time in school history.

Their story begins in the summer of 2022. With less than 7 players on the roster, Athletic Director Nick Gehler made the difficult decision to cancel the season. "I told the coach at the time that we needed to get at least 7 players to participate," said Gehler. Seven players is the required minimum to compete. "We fell short of that number and I had to make a difficult call."

His next call wasn't too difficult to make. It went to a peppy 27-year old full of energy.

In December of 2022, Head Coach Lucy Gates was hired away from Palomar College, where she had won the PCAC title during the 2022 season as interim head coach. It was now her job to find players and field a team in time for the start of the 2023 season. So, Gates searched San Diego County pools for players while also acting as the head coach of the Oceanside High School girls team. "When I got the job I had to hit the ground running with recruiting efforts," said Gates. "Luckily, we had three returning players that stuck around after the canceled season, including our star goalie Rylie Hage, so I had at least those three to lean on during the process. I cast a wide net and talked to as many area seniors as I could. I tried to over recruit and it paid off."

After each game Gates coached at Oceanside, she would seek permission from the opposing coaches to address the seniors on coming to Miramar College to continue their

Nalani Galindo was named PCAC Player of the Year.



2023 Miramar College Women's Water Polo Team

playing careers. As a product of a community college herself, having played at Palomar and then Cal-State Monterey Bay, Gates pushed the benefits of playing at a community college. "Recruits had to buy into my vision for the Miramar program."

Gates then hired assistant coaches Bennett Bugelli and Evan Dean, who she claims "were essential factors in our team's success," and away they went.

Along the way, the coaching staff added the offensive prowess of Poway High School's Nalani Galindo. Galindo led the Jets in scoring. On the defensive side, Chloe Fairchild showed up from nearby Clairemont High School and stepped up as the team's guard. In goal was returner Rylie Hage. "I was so grateful that Rylie stuck around, finding a talented goalie for your program at this level isn't easy," said Gates. "Rylie and the other two returners had their season robbed from them the year prior, so I just wanted to give them a great experience." And that she did. One that few could predict would come.

The 2023 season started September 8th with a 5-game winning streak, which included the Jets first of two wins over Mesa College. By late October, the Jets were 16 and 3 and headed to their first ever PCAC title. The "Amazin' Jets" wrapped up an unbeaten conference record in the regular season and then went on to win the PCAC tournament championship and qualify for the SoCal regional.



In early November, they were headed to the SoCal regionals where they would avenge an early season loss to Cuesta College in the first round. That victory set up a quarterfinals date with the state's top-seeded program Santa Barbara City College. The Jets trailed 7-5 before ultimately losing 14-6. Santa Barbara went on to win the SoCal regional and qualify for the state championship tournament. The Jets returned to Miramar College with a desire to improve in 2024 and a whole lot of post-season accolades for their efforts.

In the end, several "Amazin' Jets" earned post-season honors. First team All-PCAC selections included: **Rylie Hage; Chloe Fairchild; Erica Pircher; and Emma Roberson**. Second team All-PCAC selections included: **Jordy Jordison and Emma Fritz**. **Gabby Atta** was named honorable mention. **Nalani Galindo and Rylie Hage** were also named 1st Team All-Regional and All-American while **Chloe Fairchild and Erica Pircher** earned 2nd team All-Regional and All-American.

And as you can imagine, **Lucy Gates** was honored as PCAC Coach of the Year while **Nalani Galindo** was named PCAC Player of the Year.

With every current player on the team classified as an athletic freshman and eligible to return for next season, plus with another strong recruiting class, there's little doubt that 2024 will again be just as amazin'! ■

## MIRAMAR COLLEGE Approved to Offer Baccalaureate Degree



Miramar College has received approval from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) to offer a baccalaureate degree in Public Safety Management. Miramar College will now join its fellow San Diego Community College District institutions, Mesa College (Health Information Management) and City College (Cyber Defense and Analysis), in offering a bachelor's degree. Starting in the fall of 2025, Miramar College plans to launch its Bachelor's of Science degree in Public Safety Management. The College will now begin to build its upper-division courses through the College's Curriculum Committee in hopes of providing two clear tracks for students, one in law enforcement management and another in emergency management.

"This is great news for local students and current public safety employees looking to obtain a degree in the public safety sector," said Dr. Wes Lundburg, president of San Diego Miramar College. "Since 1969, Miramar College has been home to the San Diego Regional Public Safety Institute, which has provided training to most of the region's first responders. This bachelor's degree will not only strengthen the community's trust in us that we offer best-in-class instruction for those in public safety, but it will allow for first responders to be in line for promotions and salary advancements that come with obtaining a 4-year degree."

Sonya Christian, chancellor of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, congratulated Miramar College on its tireless efforts to secure approval in an Oct. 12 letter sent to the College. Earlier that day, the College's provisionally approved baccalaureate degree program was presented to the CCCC Board President and was granted conditional approval, pending receipt of an ACCJC substantive change approval letter. ACCJC is the official accrediting body of the California Community College system. After receipt of this approval letter from ACCJC, the Miramar College program will be fully approved and can launch.

Full approval was delayed due to duplication concerns from the California State University System. But those duplication concerns were dropped in early Oct.

The CCCC identified 10 industry sectors for prioritized resources and program development due to the labor market needs and opportunities to prepare students to compete in a global economy. Public Safety/Government was identified as an emerging sector for employment and higher wage jobs in the San Diego region. Based on this emerging sector identification and working closely with San Diego County Office of Emergency Services, San Diego Gas and Electric's Public Safety Division and first responder agencies throughout the region, the Miramar

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

College School of Public Safety applied to offer the Bachelor of Science: Public Safety Management degree at the end of 2022.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has ranked San Diego County 16th out of 3,142 counties nationwide on the FEMA Hazard Risk Index for the most vulnerable counties to natural disasters. The Miramar College Public Safety Management degree incorporates Governor Newsom's Initiative "Prepare California" and embeds industry certifications for disaster and emergency management planning and public safety needs to better equip law enforcement, fire, and emergency services members, first responders and allied partnerships and nonprofit organizations to be prepared for major emergencies and public safety threats most likely to encounter in the 21st century. Incorporated into the design of the curriculum will be an emphasis for place-bound students to focus on challenges in the San Diego region based on public safety threats, industry sectors, diversity in population and geographical location such as:

- Ranking for high risk for vulnerable counties to natural disasters.
- San Diego Gas and Electric (Utility Company) has developed a robust Emergency Plan including several public safety positions requiring higher education.
- San Diego is home to the nation's largest concentration of military personnel.
- There are more veterans in San Diego than there are active-duty personnel.
- The region features the largest number of Tribes and Reservations of any county in the United States.
- San Diego is home to the largest international border in the world.
- Limitations to emergency resources in the event of a disaster due to the geographical location in Southern California.

The California Community College System is the single largest provider of public safety education and training within the state servicing more than 33,500 full time equivalent students annually with public safety and services jobs comprising over 14.5% of the state's entire workforce. San Diego Miramar College is the ideal location for the proposed Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Management given workforce partnerships, industry accreditation and natural scaffolding from existing Associate of

Science degrees in Public Safety programs, especially given the identified need for future Emergency Management Director and Public Safety Management positions forecasted for employment in California.

Darren Hall, program director for the Miramar College Fire Technology Program, recently wrote in a Times of San Diego Op-Ed piece published on Oct. 10, "With the implications of climate change becoming more profound and the number and severity of natural disasters threatening our region, San Diego is in need of more well-trained emergency management professionals. Which is why San Diego Miramar College sought approval to offer a bachelor of science degree in public safety management. This industry-endorsed, faculty-driven initiative will allow students to meet the skills training and educational requirements needed to become an emergency manager at a fraction of what students must pay at four-year colleges and university."

Miramar College is perfectly suited to house such a program as the School of Public Safety already offers 10 associate of science degrees, 13 certificates of achievement, 10 certificates of performance and hosts the Regional Public Safety Training Institute.

According to the California Community College's Chancellor's Office, research has shown that community college baccalaureate programs excel at providing affordable, flexible higher education opportunities to students who are often nontraditional, low- income and place bound. By serving a racially diverse student population, community college baccalaureate programs also play a crucial role in closing equity gaps, which aligns with the goals of Vision 2030. San Diego Miramar College's program in Public Safety Management will help graduates qualify for high-wage positions in their region, bolster their upward mobility, and strengthen their communities. ■





## Accreditation Reaffirmed Through 2031

At its annual meeting June 5-6, 2024, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), the regional accrediting agency that evaluates two-year colleges in California, took action to reaffirm San Diego

Miramar College's accreditation for seven years through 2031.

In a letter from ACCJC President Mac Powell and Chair Dr. Lori Gaskin, the Commission reaffirms that San Diego Miramar College has provided evidence that it continues to be in compliance with accreditation standards, policies and eligibility requirements. The full letter can be found here: [bit.ly/3YEobc1](https://bit.ly/3YEobc1).

"This kind of outcome of an accreditation visit can only happen when everybody is working together toward fulfillment of the college mission," said Dr. Wesley Lundburg, president of San Diego Miramar College. "This outcome truly displays the College's commitment to student access, equity, and success."

The College's Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) can be found here: [sdmiramar.edu/accreditation/2024-self-eval](https://sdmiramar.edu/accreditation/2024-self-eval). The accreditation peer review team report to the campus can be found here: [bit.ly/40k1KtQ](https://bit.ly/40k1KtQ).

As part of the regular seven-year evaluation cycle, a visiting team from the ACCJC reviewed the College's comprehensive Institutional Self-Evaluation Report (ISER) and interviewed dozens of San Diego Miramar College faculty, staff and students during its campus visit February 29–March 1, 2024.

Upon completion of that visit, San Diego Miramar College received one improvement recommendation from the visiting team for improving institutional effectiveness. Campus leadership has moved swiftly to address the recommendations by the visiting team.

- **Recommendation 1:** In order to increase effectiveness, the team recommends the College implement and institutionalize its plan for collection, analysis, and disaggregation of learning outcome data for student subpopulations to assist with identifying performance gaps; implement strategies, which may include investment of resources, to mitigate the gaps; and evaluate the efficacy of those strategies. (I.B.2, I.B.6)

The next report due from the College will be the Midterm Report due March 15, 2028.

Accreditation is the primary means that educational institutions assure and improve quality. California community colleges must apply to the ACCJC, which is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. The process focuses on self-evaluation, peer review and quality improvement. Institutions are either reaffirmed or placed on sanction, which include four levels: warning, probation, show cause and termination of accreditation. ■



## Degree Completion For 2023-2024



Miramar College hosted its annual commencement ceremony Friday, May 17 on Compass Point.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, Miramar College conferred 1,194 degrees and another 705 Certificate of Achievements for a total of 1,899 awards.

Of the 1,194 associate degrees to be conferred, 522, or 44%, are Associate Degrees for Transfer (ADT), thus demonstrating that Miramar College will have prepared nearly half its degree earning students for transfer to a 4-year university.

2024 Miramar College Commencement Program can be found here: [sdmiramar.edu/commencement/2024](https://sdmiramar.edu/commencement/2024). ■



Congresswoman Sara Jacobs presented a check to San Diego Community College District.



**MIRAMAR COLLEGE**

## Regional Public Safety Institute Receives \$500,000 in Federal Funding

Congresswoman Sara Jacobs visited San Diego Mesa College on May 31 to present a check for \$1,966,279 to the San Diego Community College District for facilities improvements at Mesa College’s Family Resource Center (FRC) as well as at the Miramar College Regional Public Safety Institute.

Rep. Jacobs, whose 51st Congressional District includes both Mesa and Miramar colleges, helped secure the community project funding as part of the FY 2024 federal budget.

The largest appropriation, \$1,466,279, will benefit student parents at Mesa College, the district’s largest college.

In addition, \$500,000 in congressional funding will be spent renovating the Miramar College Regional Public Safety Institute. This includes updated instructional equipment, fitness equipment, and furniture. It will also fund a crime scene investigation room to better prepare cadets. The Miramar College Regional Public Safety Institute serves as the region’s police officer training facility for the San Diego’s law enforcement agencies, including the San Diego County Sheriff’s.

**“THE SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT IS THE LARGEST PROVIDER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING IN THE REGION WITH A \$4.5 BILLION ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT, AND I APPLAUD CONGRESSWOMAN JACOBS FOR RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO VITAL NEEDS AND SERVICES SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT, STUDENT-PARENTS AND OUR OVERALL COMMUNITY,”** said Chancellor Gregory Smith. ■



## Paralegal Program Gains Re-approval

The House of Delegates of the American Bar Association, acting on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Paralegals, granted re-approval to the Miramar College Paralegal program. ■



## REC Innovation Lab Students Clean Up at San Diego State

The REC Innovation Lab and our Miramar College High Tide AI team won the prize for the best social venture and also won third place in best overall pitch, earning \$8,000 at the SDSU Innovation Challenge held on March 22. ■

**MIRAMAR COLLEGE**

## Earns Career Innovation Award

Miramar College is a proud recipient of the 2024 Career Innovation Award from The Career Leadership Collective. Mona Patel and Arni Neff from Career Education represented the college to receive the award on April 23 in Austin, TX. The team at The Career Leadership Collective was impressed by Miramar College's innovative and equitable practices that the Career Education team is leading, such as the Discover Series events which include Discover Your Passion, Discover Your Drive and Discover Your Superpower. ■



## Associates Degree in Entrepreneurship Achieves ACBSP Accreditation

The Board of Commissioners of the Associate Degree Commission of the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) has granted national accreditation to the Associates of Science degree in Entrepreneurship at San Diego Miramar College. This brings the total number of accredited business programs at San Diego Miramar College to seven.

The Entrepreneurship Program at Miramar College is only one of three entrepreneurship programs in California and the only program in the San Diego region to be nationally accredited. ■



## Diesel Program Awarded AED Accreditation

Miramar College received accreditation by the Associated Equipment Distributors (AED) Foundation, a prestigious recognition that underscores the institution's unwavering commitment to delivering top-tier education in the field of diesel technology.

The Miramar Diesel Technology program underwent review from ASE, Automotive service Excellence and AED, Association of Equipment Dealers.

- Miramar College was re-accredited for our Heavy Duty Trucking program through ASE for 5 years.
- Miramar College was given initial accreditation from AED (first time seeking) for our Heavy Equipment Technician program.

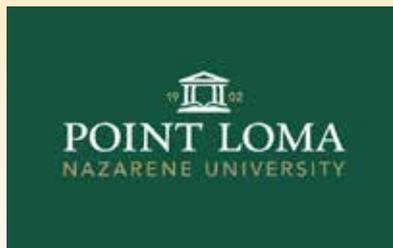
The AED Foundation is renowned for its rigorous accreditation process, which evaluates educational programs in heavy equipment technology and management, ensuring they meet industry standards and produce highly skilled graduates. Miramar College's accreditation exemplifies its dedication to excellence in diesel education. ■



**Discover Your Passion:**  
Business, Entrepreneurship, & Child Development

**Discover Your Drive:**  
Diesel, AUTO, Aviation

**Discover Your Superpower:**  
Fire, EMT, Biotech, Exercise & Nutritional Sciences



### MIRAMAR COLLEGE

## Enters Partnership With Pt. Loma Nazarene University to Offer Bachelor Degree in Business

Point Loma Nazarene University and San Diego Miramar College have entered a 3-year partnership to support students wishing to earn a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA). Starting in the spring of 2024, Miramar College students and alumni can pursue a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration without ever leaving the Miramar College campus.

This collaboration allows professors from PLNU's BBA program to teach business courses on Miramar College's Mira Mesa campus. Miramar College graduates and alumni, who have earned their AA, are qualified to enroll in this degree program and they will receive a 20% discount off the price of tuition. The degree program can be completed in just 6 semesters.



The partnership aims to provide students with a comprehensive and supportive learning experience. Alongside the discounted tuition and accelerated program duration, students enrolled in the BBA program will benefit from the cohort model implemented throughout the curriculum. By being part of a cohort, students have the opportunity to develop strong relationships and establish a network of peers who share their academic and career goals. This collaborative environment fosters a sense of community and enables students to support one another throughout their educational journey.

To further enhance student success, the program also offers access to success counselors who provide guidance and support to address any academic or personal challenges students may encounter. Additionally, a dedicated career coach is available to assist students in navigating the job market, exploring internship opportunities, and preparing for their future careers. This comprehensive support system ensures that students not only receive a quality education but also gain the necessary skills and resources to thrive both academically and professionally.

The PLNU-Miramar College partnership represents a commitment to the success and advancement of students pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. By combining the expertise of PLNU's faculty with the accessibility and resources of Miramar College, this collaboration provides an exceptional educational opportunity for aspiring business professionals. Together, these institutions are empowering students to achieve their goals and embark on successful careers in the dynamic field of business. ■



## San Diego Science Olympiad Draws Big Crowd to Miramar College

Over 1,400 area elementary and middle school students spent Saturday, Feb. 24 on campus taking part in the San Diego Science Olympiad. At the Science Olympiad, students work as teams in 23 events. The events change from year to year, covering fields and topics including: anatomy, biology, earth sciences, chemistry, physics, geology, mechanical and structural engineering, and technology. Some events involve taking a test, while others involve doing hands on labs, or bringing a device to the tournament. In this tournament, 23 middle school and 3 elementary school groups will have the opportunity to compete at the Southern California State competition in April, and potentially move on to the National Science Olympiad competition. ■



## Claudia Estrada-Howell Named Dean of the School of BTCWI

Claudia Estrada-Howell was named Dean of the School of Business, Technical Careers & Workforce Initiatives on Jan. 2, 2023. Estrada-Howell was serving as Acting Dean of BTCWI since July 1, 2023. She began her new role January 2, 2024. Estrada-Howell is well-positioned to continue progress with the relationships formed and enhanced within the School of BTCWI and Career/Tech Ed programs.

Her passion for education and student equity comes from having been a first-generation college student. Claudia earned her master's degree in Career & Technical education and is currently completing a doctorate in Educational Leadership at California State University San Bernardino. Additionally, Claudia also holds a certificate in Educational Leadership from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Currently, her research involves defining the role of career services in the community college system.

Claudia's reverence for career education can be attributed to her own family. Her father, brother, and sister all have successful careers in the fields of aircraft mechanics, automotive technology, and entrepreneurship. Prior to joining Miramar College, Claudia served the students at San Diego Mesa College as the Transfer and Career Guidance Supervisor. In this role, she oversaw the Transfer Center, Career Center, and Evaluations department. Additional previous positions include Interim Director of Career Services, Career Counselor/Coordinator, Lecturer, and Admissions Counselor.

Claudia's passion for connecting students to equitable opportunities has been demonstrated throughout her career. At her alma matter, she served as president for the Association of LatinX Faculty, Staff, and Students (ALFSS), who have since awarded over \$500,000 in scholarships to students of all backgrounds. Claudia was also awarded "Women of Distinction" by Senator Mike Morell's 23rd district for her extensive community involvement to help underserved students. Claudia is also a proud recipient of the "United States Volunteer Award for Service" (Gold Level) awarded to her by President Barack Obama. Most recently, she served as a College Director on the San Diego Mesa College Foundation. Claudia is also very involved in the San Diego & Imperial Community Colleges regional consortium and has served as a chair for the Pathway Navigation workgroup for the last three years.

Claudia will continue her work in the areas of career education, career services, career readiness, equity, student success, and budget management. Her commitment is reflected as an advocate for students, facilitator for access and support to students, and congratulatory cheerleader at Commencement. ■

### MIRAMAR COLLEGE

## Adds 3 Intercollegiate Sports Programs

Miramar College will expand its intercollegiate sports programs by adding three new sports for the upcoming academic year. The athletic department will add men's soccer, men's swimming and women's swimming bringing its total intercollegiate offerings to ten sports. Men's soccer will begin competition in the fall of 2025, while the men's and women's swimming programs will begin competition in the spring of 2025. The San Diego Community College District Board of Trustees unanimously approved the development and implementation of these three new sports programs at its April 25, 2024 board meeting.

The three new programs will compete in the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference (PCAC). ■





## Dr. Jacqueline Hester Named Dean of Public Safety

Dr. Jacqueline Hester has been hired by San Diego Miramar College as the new dean of Public Safety. She began her tenure May 1, 2024.

Dr. Hester will have oversight of the Administration of Justice, Fire Protection Technology, Emergency Medical Technician, and Lifeguard

programs. She will also manage the College's agency partnerships with the City and County of San Diego.

Dr. Hester recently served as the instructional dean of the Emeritus and Child Development programs at San Diego College of Continuing Education. She also joins Miramar College with additional years of administrative service in higher education as dean of Community Education Programs at Kennedy-King College (KKC), City of Colleges of Chicago. During her time at Kennedy-King College, Dr. Hester co-led the new information technology expansion, Tech Launchpad, which created a series of new academic programs to respond to the growing technology needs and opportunities for Kennedy-King College students. As a result, the community education programs were transformed into a 21st-century robust platform, which created highly-rated technology learning platforms and course offerings.

Dr. Hester's background and experience fit nicely with the Miramar 2.0 initiative since she has demonstrated that she can turn vision into reality through her transformative leadership.

Dr. Hester has built a strong reputation in leading and developing teams, achieving results through coaching and strategic planning, and driving cultural change for sustainability.

In addition to her higher education background, she served in the United States Army Reserve. She has also held positions in student services areas such as advising, admissions, and enrollment services. She is astute with budget and financial controls and creating strong teams. ■



### MIRAMAR COLLEGE

## AMR to Offer “Learn While You Earn” EMT Academy for Women

A partnership between AMR and Miramar College, the Earn While You Learn academy is a 16-week program in which cadets will be trained to become emergency medical technicians (EMT) and will be hired by AMR upon completing the academy and passing a national EMT exam, known as the Registry of EMT's exam.

AMR will cover the cadets' costs for tuition and books and pay them for the hours they attend class. Cadets will also be eligible for medical, dental, vision and 401K benefits.

“What better time to launch this academy than during Women's History Month (March),” said Carlos Valdez Acosta-Meza, an Operations Manager with AMR. “Women play a critical role in the field of emergency medical services, including here at AMR. This academy will help put more women on a promising and rewarding career path while bolstering the ranks of female EMTs and paramedics in the San Diego region.”

When the cadets are not in class, they will shadow AMR paramedics and EMTs as they respond to actual emergencies across San Diego County, for which they will also be paid.

The academy will teach cadets a wide variety of EMT skills, including driving an ambulance, delivering a baby, performing CPR, using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), and administering an EpiPen to someone experiencing a life-threatening allergic reaction, among other skills.

While this is the first all-female Earn While You Learn academy that AMR has sponsored, the company has held two others over the past year and a half with women and men. ■

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

# The Trio That Puts “Student” in Student Athlete

You’ve probably heard the term “student-athlete” bantered around. A Miramar College trio more than puts “student” into that term. Between women’s beach volleyball players Mia Fox, Zaria Henderson, and Natalie Repetti, the trio enrolled in a total of 87 units during the spring 2024 term, at three different colleges, all for the love of volleyball.

Natalie Repetti is a graduating senior at UC San Diego where she starred on the Triton’s division one indoor volleyball team through the fall of 2023 season. After playing in 85 matches over 3 seasons for the Tritons, she decided to play beach volleyball at Miramar College during the spring. “I was in the transfer portal for Division 1 volleyball and will play next season at Alabama,” said Repetti. “I wanted to keep in shape, so here I am competing in the spring in beach volleyball.”

Repetti is one of only a few athletes nationwide to play two sports for two different institutions in the same academic year. But she’s not the first. Nor is she the only one in her own program. Her fellow UC San Diego teammate Zaria Henderson is also doing the same. Henderson played for the Tritons this past fall and now plays for the Jets beach volleyball team in the spring. Henderson is currently in the transfer portal hoping to find a new 4-year university to play beach volleyball for.

Since UC San Diego doesn’t field a beach program both athletes are eligible to play for a second school in the same year. However, you just can’t play two sports at two different schools in the same year without enrolling as a fulltime student at both institutions. And that’s where this story gets good.

Let’s also introduce you to Mia Fox. Fox is in her second year playing for the Jets volleyball program while taking a full class load at San Diego State in pursuit of her bachelor’s in Psychology.

To remain eligible to play at Miramar College and to graduate at their 4-year institutions, the trio must be fulltime students at both institutions. That means being enrolled in at least 12 units per school. In the case of Repetti, she took 32 total units. Yes, you read that correctly! Some students don’t complete that many units over a full year, let alone a student athlete. “I enrolled in 5 courses for 20 units at UCSD,” said Repetti. “I had an upper division cognitive sciences course in Neurosciences, I had two education courses, I had a cognitive science elective course, and I had a theater class. At Miramar College, I took an economics class, a philosophy class, a fashion class and a volleyball class.” How does one do it? “It’s a little stressful, but it’s nothing too crazy, said Repetti. “The UCSD classes are harder, but because I was a



Natalie Repetti



Zaria Henderson



Mia Fox

senior there, I have learned great time management." Keep in mind, UC San Diego is on a nine-week quarter system. It can get daunting at times to make it all work. A typical day found Repetti waking up at the crack of dawn and heading to Miramar College for morning practice. She then did a weight training program required by her soon to be new school, Alabama. After lunch, it's off to La Jolla for on campus classes at UCSD. If that's not enough, she coached volleyball two nights a week at WAVE Volleyball club. Repetti then retired to her home to take her Miramar College classes online. Repetti and her pairs teammate Jaalyn Sotoa qualified for the California Community College Athletic Association's SoCal Regional playoffs. On April 26, the duo won the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference's women's pairs championship.

Zaria Henderson is enrolled in 28 units between UC San Diego and Miramar College. This past fall, she wrapped up her third season playing for the Tritons. "I am new to beach volleyball," said Henderson. "Playing here helps me get in the work I need to get better."

When asked about how she manages the grind of 28 units and playing, she quipped, "You get used to it." Henderson does admit that she often looked at Repetti during practice and asked, "How did we end up here?"



Mia Fox has taken a slightly different route. While she doesn't compete in volleyball at San Diego State, she enrolled in 27 units during the spring between SDSU (15) and Miramar College (12). She says that in order to ease the burden,

"I took a full load of 8-week courses at Miramar College that begin in January and ended in late March. It's tough at first, and asynchronous learning isn't for everyone, but I find a way to get it done." As a result, her schedule got a tad bit easier come April, but not by much. "It ends up being worth it. I do get burned out at times, but I try to ignore how tired I get." Fox plans to graduate next fall from SDSU. If you are wondering, she also works as a volleyball coach at nearby Westview High School.

This trio of Miramar College student-athletes all qualified for the CCCAA SoCal Regionals Championships which were held May 3-4 at El Camino College in Torrance, CA.

The pairs team of Henderson and Fox advanced to the State Playoffs. ■



California Community College  
Athletic Association



(L to R)—James Nguyen  
and Namod Pallek

## Two Miramar College Students Named Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship Semifinalists

Two San Diego Miramar College students were named as semifinalists for the prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship that provides a tuition-free pathway to a four-year degree at a college or university of their choice.

James Nguyen and Namod Pallek of Miramar College are the latest Miramar College students who have been named national semifinalists over the years. The two were selected from more than 1,600 applicants attending 194 community colleges in 37 states, Washington, D.C. and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Meet this year's Miramar College national semifinalists for the Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship:

**Namod Pallek** is a Miramar College standout who has served as student body president and student trustee on the SDCCD Board of Trustees and who describes himself as a passionate, first-generation student committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. "I grew up in Sri Lanka in a family of nine. When I first moved to the United States, attending college was only a dream—"The American Dream," said Pallak, who serves as a campus career ambassador. "Coming from underrepresented communities, I faced many adversities in my educational journey, from discrimination to living on the street. I decided to major in pre-law political science to become an advocate and make changes that will help more students like me."

**James Nguyen** is a Miramar College scholar on track to earn an associate of science degree in earth science studies. He participated in the NASA Proposal Writing and Evaluation Experience Academy, serves in a City of San Diego internship program and volunteers at the San Diego Library. He wrote on his LinkedIn profile that says his overarching objective is to ensure freedom of mobility for Americans, transcending barriers of race, income, and notably, automobile ownership. "I am determined to explore opportunities that will allow me to combine my skills and interests and make a meaningful impact in the American way of life." ■



## Engineering Club Excels at Nationals

The Miramar College Engineering Club shined at the MATE ROV Competition in Tennessee during the week of June 17-21, 2024. The team built and deployed an underwater vehicle that completed oceanographic tasks. The club won first place in their division in 2 categories, and our own Akili Ploudre, won the MVP award for the engineering presentation! Akili's part of the presentation stood out and the ROV frame he designed was innovative. In addition, MATE selected 4 members of the Miramar College team to participate in a 5-day voyage on an oceanography research vessel in August 2024.

Overall place: 6th out of 13

Score: 356.5 (1st place team received 466 out of a possible 750 points)

### 3 Awards:

1-Engineering Presentation MVP:

**Akili Pioudre**

2-Marketing Display Champion

3-Engineering Presentation Champion ■

# STUDENT SUCCESS



## NASA Here We Come

Miramar College student Daniel Elgale was accepted into Mission 1 of the 2023 NCAS (National Community College Aerospace Scholars)

Program at NASA. Students participating in the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars (NCAS) activity can expect to advance their capabilities in STEM, helping to prepare them for better representation and service in STEM fields. NCAS has three missions designed to challenge and build student knowledge and skills by focusing on NASA's mission goals, collaboration, and career pathways.

**Mission 1:** Discover is a 5-week, self-paced online course. This orientation to NASA sets a baseline for all students wishing to pursue subsequent NCAS missions. Students will gain a broad knowledge of what NASA has in its current plan and how they can play a role. STEM based activities embedded in the online course include live and recorded subject matter expert lectures, interactive multimedia on NASA content, interactions with fellow aerospace scholars, knowledge assessments including a final project, and guidance and support from trained professional educators. ■



Anna Rigby



David Barrios-Diaz

## Diesel Duo Shines

The Miramar College diesel technology duo of Anna Rigby and David Barrios-Diaz had a strong showing at the California Skills USA competition! Anna was awarded the silver medal and David was awarded the gold medal. David went on to represent the state of California at the Skills USA National Competition in Atlanta, GA in June 2024. ■



## Student Elections

Here are the results of 2024-2025 Associated Student Government Elections held in May 2024.

President **Hailey Hua** | Vice-President **X Ruiz** | Secretary **Kylee Guiriba**

Treasurer **Sindhu Narasimha** | Senator **John Antonio** | Senator **Jeff Florentino**

Senator **Ann Le** | Senator **Claudio Nevells** | Senator **Seoyun Park**

Senator **Tara Patel** | Senator **Daniel Sifuentes** | Senator **Frankco Wong**



## Women's Water Polo Post-season Honors



Rylie Hage      Chloe Fairchild      Erica Pircher      Emma Roberson

First team All-PCAC selections: **Rylie Hage**; **Chloe Fairchild**; **Erica Pircher**; and **Emma Roberson**.



Jordy Jordison      Emma Fritz      Gabby Atta

Second team All-PCAC selections: **Jordy Jordison** and **Emma Fritz**. **Gabby Atta** was named honorable mention.



Nalani Galindo      Rylie Hage      Chloe Fairchild      Erica Pircher

**Nalani Galindo** and **Rylie Hage** were also named 1st Team All-Regional and All-American while **Chloe Fairchild** and **Erica Pircher** earned 2nd team All-Regional and All-American.

Head Coach **Lucy Gates** was honored as PCAC Coach of the Year while **Nalani Galindo** was named PCAC Player of the Year. ■

(L to R) — Coach Lucy Gates and Nalani Galindo



## Duo Win PCAC Beach Volleyball Title

**Natalie Repetti** and **Jaalyn Sotoa** brought home the PCAC Beach Volleyball pairs championship for the 2024 season. Natalie and Jaalyn, a 6th seed in the tournament, rallied to win the title. They were one of two teams from Miramar College that qualified for the SoCal Regionals in Beach Volleyball. ■



Natalie Repetti      Jaalyn Sotoa-Stuebing



## Post-Season Beach Volleyball Awards



Jaalyn Sotoa-Stuebing      Natalie Repetti      Julia Kallen



Samdrea Hsu      Zaria Henderson      Mia Fox

All-PCAC: **Jaalyn Sotoa-Stuebing**, **Natalie Repetti**, **Julia Kallen**, **Samdrea Hsu**, **Zaria Henderson**, **Mia Fox** ■



Elif Solmaz



Logan Mendez

## Post-Season Women's Volleyball Selections

First team All-PCAC: **Elif Solmaz**

Second team All-PCAC:  
**Logan Mendez** ■



## Post-Season Men's Volleyball Awards



Joshua Valencia



Noah Lim

First team All-PCAC: **Joshua Valencia, Noah Lim**

Second team All PCAC: **Nick Everett, Cooper Buchanan**

Honorable mention: **Will Fabrie** and **Jeremy Pineda** ■



Nick Everett



Cooper Buchanan



Will Fabrie



Jeremy Pineda



Markees Williams

## Williams Signs with Sonoma State

Men's basketball player **Markees Williams** signed with Sonoma State University. As a starter for the Miramar Jets, Markees averaged an impressive 12.0 PPG, 4.1 RPG, and 3.9 APG.

Out of Helix High School in San Diego, Markees will be joining the SSU Seawolves, a Division II team competing in the California Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA). At SSU, Markees plans to pursue a degree in business, combining his passion for athletics with a strong academic foundation. ■



Prince Adjei

## Prince Adjei Signs with Oklahoma Panhandle

Men's basketball player **Prince Adjei** signed with

Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OPSU). Prince's journey from Accra, Ghana, to San Diego, and now to Oklahoma, is a testament to his perseverance and passion for the game. ■

## Basketball Post-Season Men's Honors

The following student athletes from the men's basketball team were awarded post-season honors:



Charlie Gehler



Markees Williams

**Charlie Gehler**  
PCAC 1st Team

**Markees Williams**  
PCAC 1st team



Mike Batchelor



Gaebreal Perry

**Mike Batchelor**  
PCAC 2nd team

**Gaebreal Perry**  
PCAC All Conference  
Honorable Mention ■

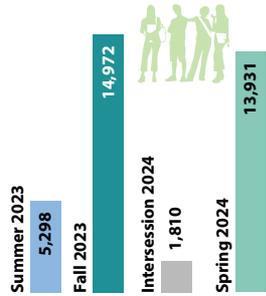


Enrollment  
Total 2023-2024  
FTES 8,382

Annual Unduplicated  
Headcount 2023-2024  
24,384



Headcount by Term



Mode of Instruction  
Fall 2023

44%  
On-Campus 12,551

56%  
Online 16,057

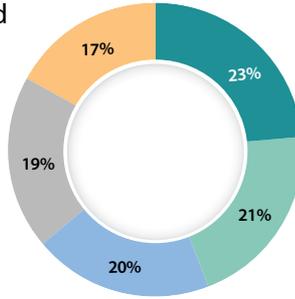
Sections Offered  
Fall 2023

51%  
On-Campus 634

49%  
Online 602

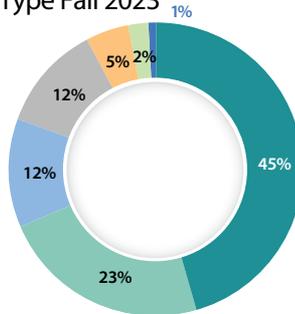
Top 5 Majors Selected  
by Students Fall 2023

- Associate Degree for Transfer 1,565
- Administration of Justice 1,355
- Business Administration 1,296
- Biology 1,252
- Fire Technology 1,114



Enrollment by Course Type Fall 2023

- UC/CSU Transferable 24,497
- Career Technical Education 12,352
- Arts/Humanities 6,320
- Sciences 6,205
- Social/Behavior Sciences 2,614
- Not College Level/Support Courses 1,117
- Honors Program 405



Degrees/Certificates Awarded Fall 2023-2024

AA/AS Degree  
1,194

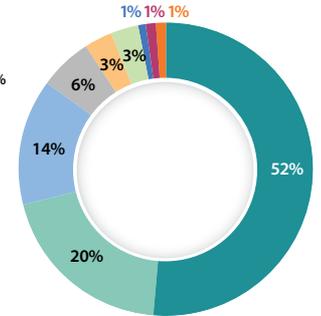
Associate Degrees for Transfer  
(this number is included in 1,194 total degrees awarded)  
522

Certificate of Achievement  
705

Total Degrees and Certificates  
Note: Only state approved certificates are reported here  
1,899

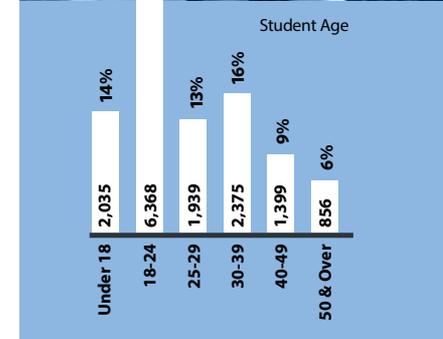
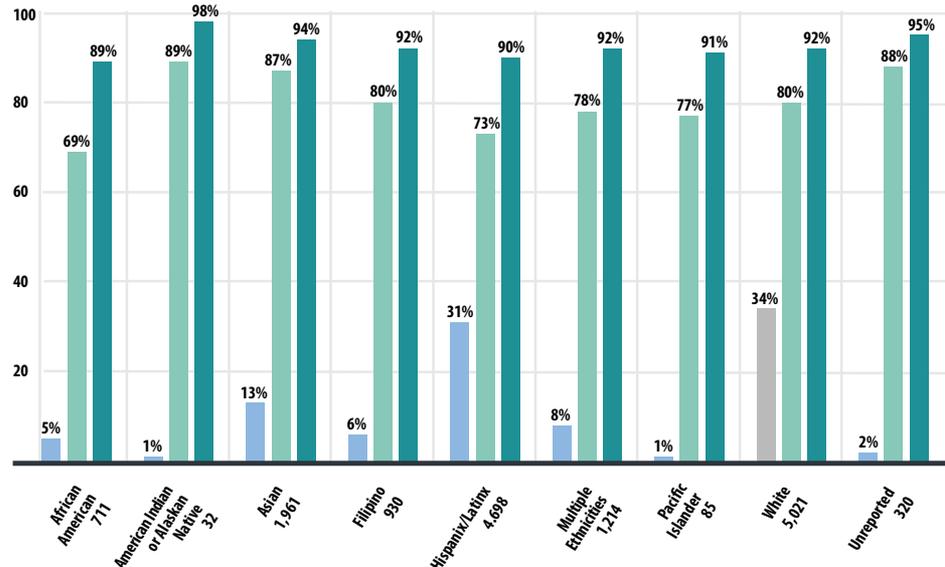
Student Enrollment Type

- High School Diploma 52%
- High School Concurrent 20%
- Bachelors Degree 14%
- Associates Degree 6%
- California Certificate of High School Proficiency 3%
- International High School Diploma 3%
- California Certificate of High School 1%
- No High School 1%
- Enrolled in Adult School 1%



Success and Retention

Race/Ethnicity - Fall 2023 Success Rate Retention Rate



### First generation college students Fall 2023

26%



### 40% Students receiving financial aid Fall 2023

9,831



### 4% Students receiving DSPS services Fall 2023

1,011



### Student course load

Full-Time 2,136 | 14%  
(12 or more credits)

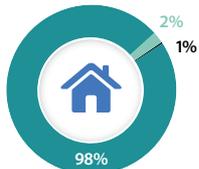
Part-Time 12,836 | 86%  
(Fewer than 12 credits)



### Military Status Total: 2,505 | 17%

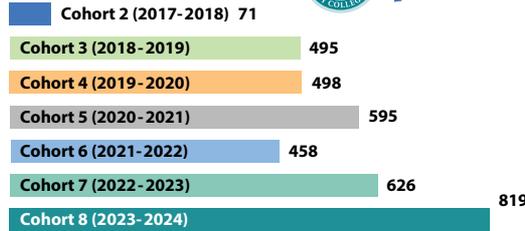


### Headcount by Residency Total: 14,972 Fall 2023



98% Resident 14,622  
2% Non-resident 335  
1% International Student 15

### San Diego Promise Fall 2023

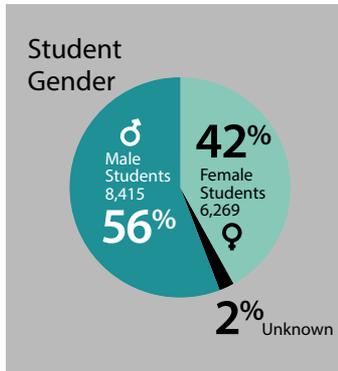


### Employment Status at Time of Application Fall 2023

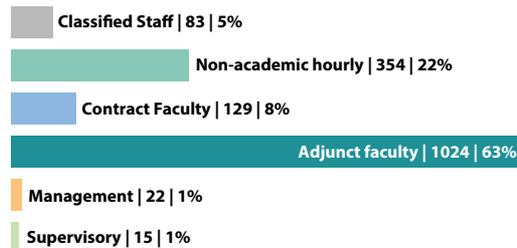
Employed < 40 Hours: 47%

Employed ≥ 40 Hours: 21%

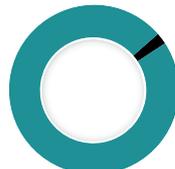
Not Working: 32%



### Employees 1,627

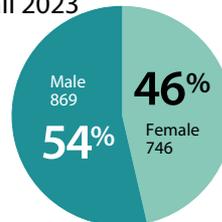


### Special Admitted Headcount Fall 2023



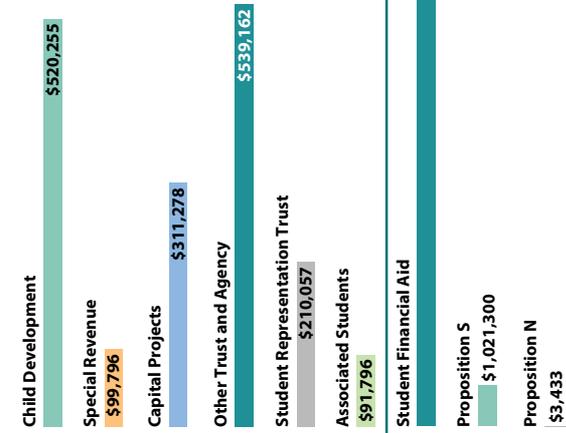
11% CCAP 1,646  
ACP N/A  
1% Concurrent 132

### Employee Gender Fall 2023



Non-binary, unknown, unreported less than 1%

## Operating Budget Fiscal Resources



Child Development	\$520,255
Special Revenue	\$99,796
Capital Projects	\$311,278
Other Trust and Agency	\$539,162
Student Representation Trust	\$210,057
Associated Students	\$91,796
Student Financial Aid	\$14,633,594
Proposition S	\$1,021,300
Proposition N	\$3,433
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$102,214,849</b>



Fall 2023-2024

**Restricted**  
Resources generally from an external source that are required to be used for specific purposes.

**Unrestricted**  
Resources available for the general purposes of district operations and support of its educational programs.



(L to R)—Homer Hogg,  
Frank Woodson, Joseph  
Young, Tim Zilke

## Joseph Young Wins Gates Tools/ASE Instructor of the Year

Joseph Young, an ASE Certified automotive instructor at Miramar College, was honored with a national achievement award as the Gates Tools for Schools/ASE Instructor of the Year. Fifty-three automotive professionals were recognized on November 15, 2023, at the Fall Board of Governors meeting of the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) held at the Hilton Clearwater Beach Resort & Spa Clearwater, Florida.

The ASE annual awards spotlight top scorers on the ASE Certification tests from among the ranks of the approximately quarter million ASE Certified professionals nationwide. Frank Woodson, National Training Manager for Gates; Homer Hogg, Chair of the ASE Board of Directors; and Timothy Zilke, ASE President & CEO, presented the award to Young.

“Joe is one of the outstanding ASE certified professionals recognized annually by different segments of the automotive service and repair industry,” said Timothy Zilke. “Each of these elite technicians is presented with an industry-specific award recognizing their achievement,” said Zilke.

“ASE has honored extraordinary industry professionals from across the nation for more than 40 years,” Zilke continued. “This is made possible by the support of our many award sponsors, whose ranks include some of the best-known names in the industry. We are proud to partner with Gates to recognize Joe’s commitment to excellence in providing the very best in automotive technology education for his students. This dedication is reflected in the talented professionals we recognize each year and Joe represents the best of the best.” ■



## Duran Selected for Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowship

Alexis Duran, an adjunct professor in the digital film production department at Miramar College, has been selected for an *Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowship* by the Television Academy Foundation. He is one of just 12 professors selected from colleges and universities nationwide for the fellowship program.

Named in honor of the late Alex Trebek, longtime host of the quiz show Jeopardy!, the Alex Trebek Legacy Fellowships offer financial support to attendees of the Foundation’s annual Media Educators Conference. The three-day conference, held this year at the Academy’s North Hollywood Campus in California Oct. 25-27, connects college classrooms with the television industry by providing media professors with curriculum-enhancing seminars on the latest in the art, science and business of television with prominent leaders in show business. ■



## Arancibia Authors U-T Op-Ed

Miramar College English Professor Adrian Arancibia authored a July 6 Op-Ed piece in the San Diego Union Tribune. His opinion piece focused on local artists who struggle to afford to stay in the community. Read his piece here: [bit.ly/4frlkYd](https://bit.ly/4frlkYd) Opinion: *Many artists can’t afford to stay in San Diego*—The San Diego Union-Tribune ([sandieguniontribune.com](http://sandieguniontribune.com)) ■

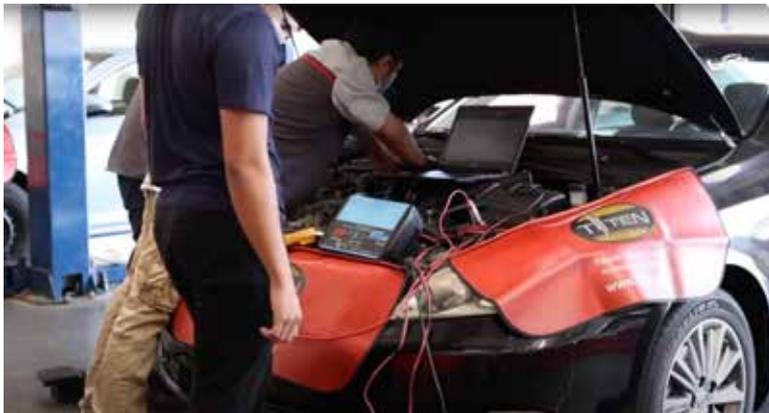
# FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Automotive Program Instructor Named Teacher of the Year

Monte Vista High School Automotive Technology teacher Michael Fleming has been named Grossmont Union High School District's Teacher of the Year. With 20 years of experience as an educator and 35 years of experience as a master automotive technician, Fleming has served Monte Vista High School since

2008. He holds an associate degree in automotive, earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in education, and teaches advanced automotive classes at Miramar College. Fleming's former auto shop students include military technicians, business-owners, engineers, scientists, and many others with careers in automotive and transportation. Fleming has students compete annually in the SkillsUSA automotive competitions, and this year one student advanced to the national championship where he placed 24th. ■



## Brit Hyland Wins Cal Coast Cares Educator Grant

Brit Hyland, associate professor of Physics and Astronomy, was selected to receive a Cal Coast Cares Foundation Educator Grant in the amount of \$650.

The Educator's Grant program provides monetary support to the local educational community to fund learning opportunities for students in the STREAM subject categories of science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Cal Coast awarded over \$66,000 in educator grants this past year. ■

## Credit For Prior Learning Appointments



Maryam Tartoussia was selected for the position of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Coordinator. Under the direction of the administrative representative to the college's Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Advisory Committee, and in close cooperation with colleagues from a variety of disciplines, the CPLC will work to advance a student-focused CPL program at Miramar College. Alex Mata was selected for the position of Military Educational Lead for CPL. ■

## New Faculty Hires in Counseling Department

The Counseling Department added the following three contract counselors in July 2023.



### Martin Gonzalez

Martin was born and raised throughout multiple cities in the San Gabriel Valley (Baldwin Park, La Puente, El Monte). His parents are from Jalisco, Mexico and migrated to the United States in the late 1980s. As a first-generation college student, it was with the help of student support services that he successfully transferred from Mt. San Antonio College to the University of California, Los Angeles. At UCLA, he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. Martin's personal struggles as a community college student have allowed him to understand the

barriers, challenges, and impact that the community college system plays in the lives of our students. Shortly after earning his Master's Degree in Counseling from Long Beach State, he started his counseling journey as a "freeway flyer" working at several districts in Los Angeles County. He has had the privilege of serving as a counselor in a wide array of roles, including but not limited to: general counseling, dual enrollment, special admit, transfer and EOPS. His personal eclectic approach to counseling is guided by the students' need. ■



### Veronica Hartmann

Veronica grew up in North County San Diego, and then moved to Los Angeles for college. She received an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences from Palomar, and transferred to UCLA where she achieved her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Sociology, with a minor in Chicana and Chicano Studies. She then received a Master's of Science in College Counseling and Student Services from CSU Northridge.

Veronica was inspired to be a counselor in part due to the EOPS counselor she met during her community college career, who provided her with a sense of belonging and support. She has worked as an adjunct at the California Community Colleges for nine years, including her most recent role as an adjunct counselor at Miramar College in General

Counseling. She also has experience as an outreach counselor and program coordinator in the UC and CSU systems. She has been involved in a wide variety of student support programs, including: Transfer, EOP&S, ESL, Upward Bound, the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and GEAR-UP. As a counseling professional, her goal is to help students to feel like they belong in higher education. ■



### Dr. Laura Marin

Laura grew up in South LA and Venice and attended Santa Monica Community College where she received an Associate Degree in Liberal Studies. She transferred to California State University, Long Beach and received a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies. Laura was a first-generation college

student who did not know how to navigate the community college system and this ignited her passion to help others in similar situations. This passion led her to pursue a Master's Degree in Educational Counseling at the University of Southern California. Most recently, she completed a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from CSULB. Laura has served as a general counselor since 2014 in several roles in the Los Angeles basin area (East Los Angeles College, LA Harbor College, Rio Hondo College, Santa Ana College). In her most recent role, she served as the First Year Experience Counselor Coordinator at Long Beach City College. Laura is dedicated to serving underrepresented, first-generation college students as they navigate their life's passions in a holistic manner. ■



## Fusco Hired to Teach Accounting

Professor John Fusco earned a BS in Business Administration with an emphasis in Accounting in 1997 at California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM). After college, he worked in public accounting as an auditor of municipal governments and became a Certified Public Accountant before completing work on his Master's Degree in Computer Information Systems

at the University of Phoenix in 2001.

In 2003, he began working as an adjunct at San Diego Mesa College. Between 2000 and 2017, he worked as the Interim Finance Director for the City of Solana Beach, Finance Manager for the Vallecitos Water District, Associate Faculty for MiraCosta College, and Guest Lecturer at CSUSM. In 2016, he earned the nationally recognized Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) credential and allowed the credential to become inactive during COVID-19. In 2022, he wrote and published; California Individual Taxation, A Guide for Students, with McGraw Hill Publishing. The guide qualifies as a low-cost textbook. ■



## Guerra Hired as Automotive Professor

Professor Eloy Guerra earned his B.A. in Management from National University, a certificate of completion in Human Resources Management from National University, and a certificate of completion in Automotive Mechanics from the San Diego Community College District. He is a Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) certified instructor and has been working

as an adjunct at Miramar College since 2016. For the last ten years, he has also worked for the Foundation for California Community Colleges. He has over twenty years of experience in vehicle emissions testing and repair. ■



## Kiel Hired as Paralegal Faculty

Professor Kiyana Kiel, Esq., is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley School of Law, where she served as an articles editor for the Berkeley Journal of African American Law & Policy and as the law school's representative to the campus-wide Graduate Assembly. She transferred from Cerritos Community College to the University of California,

Los Angeles (UCLA) where she earned a B.A. in American Literature & Culture with College Honors. During law school and college, Kiyana was active in institutional, as well as student-run academic support programs, and provided advising and tutoring for struggling law and undergraduate students.

Prior to joining Miramar College, she served as the assistant dean for Academic Achievement and adjunct faculty at California Western School of Law overseeing all aspects of academic support and bar exam preparation courses and programs. She also served as the director of Academic Success and Bar Programs at the University of San Diego Law School, and as an adjunct professor teaching Fundamentals of Bar Exam Writing. Outside of legal academia, she worked as a real estate, land use, and environmental in-house attorney for a municipal utility in northern California and as an associate at law firms in Los Angeles and San Diego. She brings significant policy research, regulatory compliance, and transactional experience.

Kiyana's research focuses on the interconnections of social organizations; in particular, race and class, and their intersection with education, land use, and environmental laws, systems, and institutions. She is passionate about equity and access to higher education and looks forward to working with the wonderfully diverse student population at Miramar. In her spare time, she enjoys watching documentaries or stand-up comedy, listening to audiobooks, and most importantly spending time and traveling with her daughter, fur-baby, and husband. ■

## 2023-2024 FACULTY &amp; STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## Nevarez Joins Diesel Faculty

Professor Valentino Nevarez did not choose Diesel as a career path, he believes Diesel chose him. In 2009, Professor Nevarez enlisted in the Marine Corps to become a trombone player in the "President's Own" but Diesel had different plans. He took his first steps as a Diesel Technician in 2010 after attending Boot Camp, Marine Corps Infantry Training, and a 3-month Diesel school.

Between 2010 - 2017, Professor Nevarez served in the Marine Corps and was stationed between Camp Pendleton, Camp Leatherneck in Afghanistan, Okinawa, Japan, and Twenty-Nine Palms. During this time, he worked repairing diesel trucks and became a Shop Chief, where he reorganized, maintained, and supervised all areas of maintenance per Marine Corps regulations including hazmat, safety, floor chief, preventative maintenance, quality control, tool room, and layettes. After serving for 8 years in the Marine Corps, he ventured to gain a deeper meaning about Diesel, and in 2017, he took his first class at Miramar College. While in the Diesel Technology program at Miramar College, Professor Nevarez had the privilege to attend a national diesel competition called FutureTech, where he placed 8th out of 48 competitors. In 2019, Professor Nevarez graduated from Miramar College with an Associate of Science Degree in Diesel Technology with Honors. From the competition and post-graduation, he was able to make a connection with FedEx Freight and had worked for them for the past 4 years as a Senior Diesel Technician. Professor Nevarez is now back at Miramar College teaching the subject he loves the most, DIESEL. ■



## Gates Hired as Exercise Science Faculty

Miramar Athletics has hired Lucy Gates as the full-time Exercise Science faculty member and Head Coach for Women's Water Polo and Men's and Women's

Swim. This exciting development marks a significant milestone for the department, as Gates transitions from her previous part-time role, where she solely coached the women's water polo team.

Gates has made a profound impact during her tenure at Miramar. Her exceptional leadership and coaching skills were prominently recognized last season when she was honored as the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference (PCAC) Coach of the Year. This prestigious accolade came on the heels of a triumphant season where she led the women's water polo team to a conference title, showcasing her ability to inspire and drive her team to success. ■

## 2023-24 Academic Senate Executive Team

President **Pablo Martin** | Vice-President/President-Elect: **Carmen Carrasquillo** | Secretary: **Rodrigo Gomez**

Treasurer: **Dawn Diskin** | Contract Member at Large: **Olivia Flores**

Adjunct/Part-Time Member at Large: **Desi Klaar** | Chair of the Chairs Committee: **Kevin Petti**

Chair of the Curriculum Committee: **Darren Hall**

Classified Professional's Awards 2023–2024 was held Wednesday, May 29 on campus. Below is the list of service time honorees and award winners:



- 5** **5-Year Service Awards**  
 Daniel Borunda  
 Jill De La Cruz Nevarez  
 Robert De Requesens  
 Ron Felix  
 Chantal Hernandez  
 Mark Jackson  
 Malia Kunst  
 Alejandro "Alex" Ortega Jr.  
 Jennifer Pena  
 Anh Truong

- 10** **10-Year Awards**  
 Jeffrey Josephson  
 Arnice Neff  
 Janee Robinson

- 30** **30-Year Awards**  
 Alice Nelson

- 15** **15-Year Awards**  
 Emilia Manalastas  
 Bill T. Smith

- 35** **35-Year Awards**  
 Lynne Campbell

- 25** **25-Year Awards**  
 Adam Feria  
 Joseph Hankinson  
 Roy Kinley

- 40** **40-Year Awards**  
 Jack Hermann

**Classified Professional's Awards 2023–2024**

These awards are Peer level awards for Classified Professionals open to Supervisors and Staff. The purpose of these awards is to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of Classified Professionals here at Miramar College.

-  **Biggest Fan**  
 The Lunch Ladies

-  **The Energizer**  
 Stan Herivaux

-  **Rookie of the Year**  
 John Abbot

-  **The Communicator**  
 Malia Kunst

-  **The Innovator**  
 Sharilyn Wilson

-  **Unsung Heroes**  
 Sharilyn Wilson

-  **Exceptional Achievement**  
 Kaanchan Farkiya

-  **The Mentor**  
 Carol Sampaga

-  **Outstanding Classified Professional of the Year**  
 Arni Neff

-  **Dream Team**  
 Department Award  
 Outreach/Welcome Center

-  **The Team Player**  
 Lynne Campbell

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

# Kevin Petti: Then and Now

## How long have you worked with the District/Miramar College?

I was hired at Miramar College in 1987 as adjunct faculty, and then hired as a tenure track member of the contract faculty in 1991. I have known every Miramar College President, starting with George Yee, the first president. At this time, I am pretty sure I am the most senior member of the faculty, having taught here a total of 36 years (32 of those years as full-time faculty). Paul Chlapecka in Aviation at Miramar may have me beat by a year, not sure, but you are safe to say at the least “one of the most senior members of the faculty” but I am pretty sure I am the “most senior”. It is my plan to retire at the end of the 2024-2025 academic year.



THEN

## Over your tenure of employment, what areas of study have you taught?

I have taught: Biology 160: Human Anatomy and Physiology, Biology 232: Human Dissection Experience, Health 101: Health and Lifestyle, and Exercise Science 281: Applied Anatomy and Kinesiology. I have served in the past, and now also presently serve as the Department Chair for Exercise and Nutritional Sciences; and my department chair colleagues have recently elected me the Chair of the Department Chairs Committee (fitting as the most senior department chair on campus). I am also the Miramar College Campus Representative for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) the faculty union.

## What significant changes in the District have you seen over the years?

WOW! That is a huge question. The biggest for me is the development of the Miramar College campus. When I was hired it was a campus of bungalows atop asphalt, dusty decomposed granite parking lots, not much lighting at night, and very limited programs. I was, however, able to part of the many phased planning process that resulted in the beautiful campus we have today.

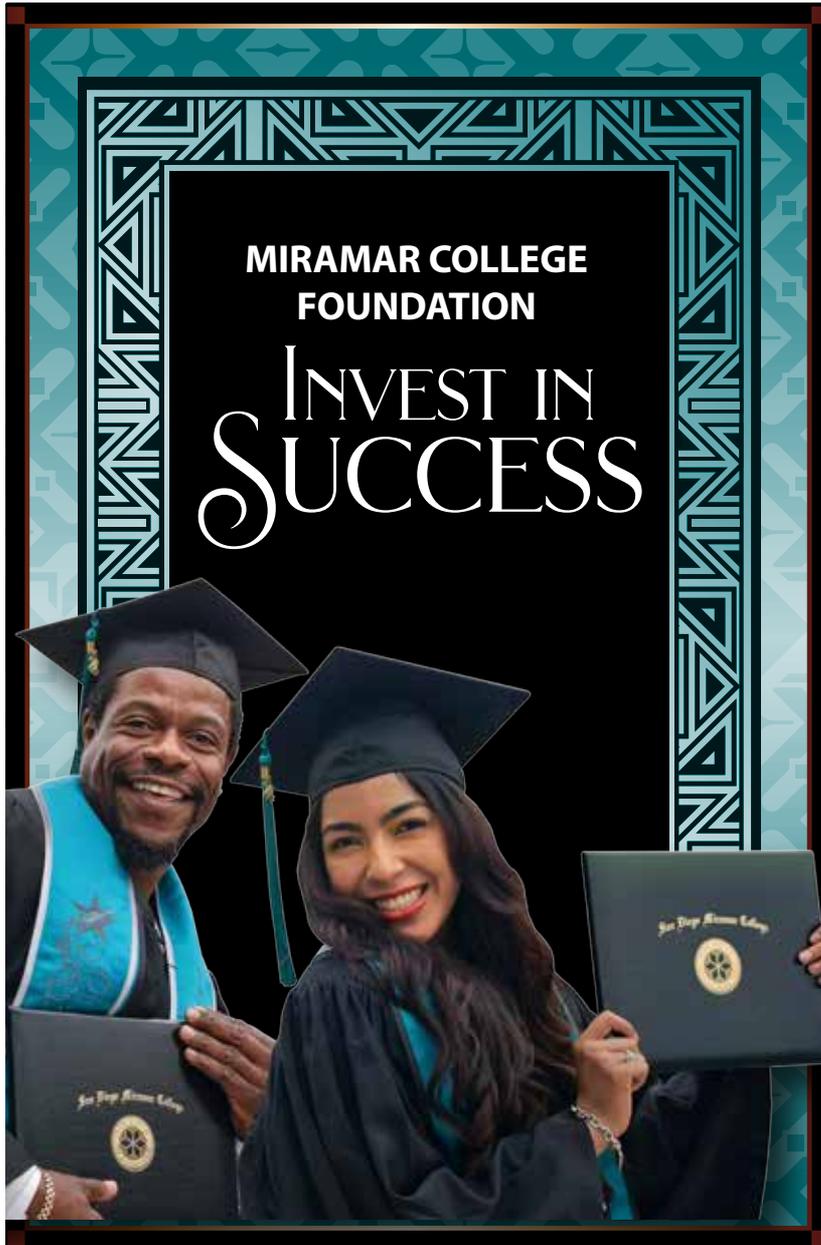
## Any particular memory stand out to you that you'd like to share?

I have a few: I remember when we tried to expand the Biology program by teaching labs in a bungalow, but that didn't work well because you couldn't keep a microscope focused as students moved in the bungalow causing it to shake too much, causing the microscope to continually go out of focus! I remember having to turn my computer keyboard upside down every morning to dump out the termite droppings that fell overnight from the ceiling in my bungalow! I remember a campus evacuation when construction workers were trenching to pull electrical to the (then) new marquee on Black Mountain Road, when they found an unexploded bomb from when the campus was a Navy landing field and practice bombing target prior to and during World War III! I remember going for a run in the northernmost, desolate part of campus, in the area of the current Transit Station and Administration Building, and having to avoid rattlesnakes and coyotes! ■



NOW

# Miramar College Foundation



## Invest in the Future

*The mission of the Miramar College Foundation is to make a positive difference in the lives of San Diego Miramar College students, offering opportunity for advancement and learning, for a life of better citizenship, increased productivity and satisfaction of attained goals.*

## Invest in Success

One-hundred and sixteen attended the event held at Bali Hai restaurant on Shelter Island. The Annual Invest in Success fundraiser returned after being canceled three consecutive years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The October fundraiser generated \$17,000.00 in revenue.

Foundation Finances	July 1, 2022	June 30, 2023
Total Restricted Fund Balance	\$245,580.05	\$329,866.89
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$249,357.42	\$206,718.73
Unrestricted Reserve for Scholarship	\$391,000.00	\$391,000.00
Total Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$640,357.42	\$597,718.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$885,937.47</b>	<b>\$927,585.62</b>

## Miramar College Foundation Student Scholarships

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total* Number Scholarships Issued	57	72	66	76
Face Value of all Scholarships Issued	\$143,346	\$118,049	\$183,594	\$190,710
Total MCF** Scholarships Issued	16	28	40	41
Face Value of MCF Scholarships	\$6,200	\$9,500	\$114,612	\$98,857

\*Total = Scholarships funded by private donors, corporate donors and Miramar College Foundation Unrestricted (General) Fund.

\*\*MCF = Scholarships funded solely from Miramar College Foundation Unrestricted (General) Fund.



## Dr. Roberta C. Baade Joins Miramar College Foundation Board Feb. 21, 2024

Dr. Roberta C. Baade has been selected as the newest community board member to serve on the San Diego Miramar College Foundation Board of Directors. In a unanimous vote taken at the Feb. 21 board meeting, Dr. Baade was elected to a 3-year term.

Dr. Baade is no stranger to the San Diego Miramar College campus. She was the wife of former Miramar College president, the

late Dr. George Yee. Yee was the first full-time president of the college, serving from 1977-1989.

Dr. Baade has over 25 years of leadership experience in the field of Human Resources, that included the disciplines of training and development, labor relations, international human resources, benefits and compensation for numerous companies.

She served as Vice President of Human Resources at General Dynamics Space Systems Division and Vice President of Human Resources at Sunrise Medical before joining Jenny Craig, Inc.

Dr. Baade retired in 2006 from Jenny Craig, Inc. after 8 years as Vice President of Human Resources.

She taught for a number of years at Pepperdine University's Graduate School in the MBA program and graduated with her Ph.D. from the University of Colorado. An alumni of community college herself, Dr. Baade stated, "I think that community colleges play a crucial role in education by providing accessible and affordable pathways to higher learning. They serve diverse populations, offering a chance for individuals to acquire skills, pursue higher education, and contribute to their communities' social and economic development. I am honored to serve on Miramar College's Foundation Board."

The Miramar College Foundation, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, was officially created on August 21, 1994 and is committed to supporting the diverse population of Miramar College students by raising scholarship funds. ■

**"IT IS SUCH A PLEASURE TO WELCOME DR. BAADE TO OUR FOUNDATION BOARD,"** said Dr. Wesley P. Lundburg, president of Miramar College. **"I AM NOT SURE I HAVE EVER MET SOMEONE FROM OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION WITH SUCH A PASSION FOR MIRAMAR COLLEGE AND ITS MISSION OF SERVING STUDENTS. DR. BAADE WAS PRESENT IN MIRAMAR COLLEGE'S EARLIEST YEARS AND HELPED LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE COLLEGE AS IT STANDS TODAY. SHE WILL MAKE A WONDERFUL ADDITION TO THE BOARD."**

## Foundation Board of Directors

Foundation President: Sarah Yang, Senior Vice President and Senior Relationship Manager, Bank of America

Foundation Treasurer: Brett Bell V.P., Administrative Services, San Diego Miramar College

Roberta C. Baade, Ph.D., Community Board Member, Vice President of Human Resources, Jenny Craig, Inc. (Ret.)

Don Boas, Community Board Member, Sales Manager, Glory Land Enterprise

Lily Cava, Classified Senate, San Diego Miramar College

Saigel Ghotra, President, Associated Student Government, San Diego Miramar College

Mike Johnson, Community Board Member, Vice President, Hawthorne CAT

Rene McKee, Community Board Member, Vice President, Marketing & Community Relations, California Coast Credit Union (Ret.)

Pablo Martin, Academic Senate, Representative, San Diego Miramar College

# THE 30TH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP *Awards Ceremony* 2024



Miramar College awarded deserving students just over \$190,000 at its 30th annual scholarship awards ceremony held on campus April 16. Miramar College students, their guests and families, along with the College’s classified professional staff and faculty, San Diego Community College District officials and community partners gathered in L-105 to watch the celebration.

This year, the Miramar College Foundation administered 76 scholarships to 173 recipients totaling \$190,710.

The Miramar College Foundation itself presented 41 scholarship awards totaling \$98,857. Another 35 awards, totaling \$91,853, were given by external donors.

“This is one of my favorite events held on campus each year,” said Dr. Wesley Lundburg, president of Miramar College. “I am extremely proud, that through the support of the Miramar College Foundation and the generosity of our community partners, we are able to offer this financial

benefit to our deserving students and their families. Over the years, our students have demonstrated hard work and dedication toward their educational goals and, as a college, we are pleased to help lessen the financial burden through scholarship aid.”

The Miramar College Foundation, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, was officially created on August 21, 1994 and is committed to supporting the diverse population of Miramar College students by raising scholarship funds.

The annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony is organized by the College’s Financial Aid and Scholarship Office. ■

You can view a list of the scholarships and winners here: [bit.ly/4hCYkba](https://bit.ly/4hCYkba)

A YouTube video of the event can be found here: [youtube.com/watch?v=gfequ94PHRY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=gfequ94PHRY)

## Foundation Board of Directors Ex-Officio Members and Honorary Directors:

**Ex-Officio Members:**

- P. Wesley Lundburg, Ph.D., President, San Diego Miramar College
- Lisa Cole-Jones, Director of Development and Entrepreneurship, San Diego Miramar College
- Steve Quis, Public Information Officer, San Diego Miramar College

**Honorary Directors:**

- Bob Dingeman\*
- Tony Pizarro, Chairman, Integrity Management Enterprises
- Martin Hight, Past President, Miramar College Foundation; Chief, Emeritus, San Diego Harbor Police

Tom Hawthorne\*, Chairman, Hawthorne Machinery Company

Howard Schuler, Service Director Emeritus, Toyota Carlsbad

Dave Stall, Vice President, Miramar College Foundation; 760 KFMB Host, Car Talk, KUSI & Columnist North County Times

\*In memoriam

Miramar College librarian **Angela Boyd** graduated from the LEAD OER program in July 2023. Angela's capstone project examined the history of the college textbook publishing industry and the economics of textbook pricing.

**Alexandra (Alex) Hofler** is the new MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) Program Director. Her start date was Sept. 5.

**Jenelle Castillejos** has been named Business Office Support Supervisor.

The Department of Student Development & Matriculation welcomed Transfer Center Faculty Coordinator/Counselor, **Emi Kawafuchi**.

**Edward King** has been named Senior Accounting Technician for Administrative Services. Edward will be supporting the Business Office and campus in the areas of Budget Development, General Accounting and Financial Reporting.

Business Officer Supervisor **Elaine Vega** retired after 29 years of service to both Miramar College and the San Diego Community College District.

**Stanley Herivaux** was promoted from acting Stock Room Supervisor to permanent Stock Room Supervisor.

**Adrian Acain** joined the VPI Office in August 2023 as Administrative Technician/Lead Scheduler. Adrian has been part of Miramar since 2015 working in part-time positions as Instructional Lab Assistant and Project Assistant. In 2016, he became a full-time employee supporting Dean Linda Woods and the School of MBEPS.

**Melanie Baeza** is the new Work-Based Learning (WBL) Coordinator at Miramar College. She began her position on September.

**Dianika Moore** is the new Administrative Assistant IV for the Office of Student Development.

**Brenda O'Connor** joins Miramar College as Acting Administrative Assistant IV in the Office of the Dean of Mathematics, Biology, Exercise, and Physical Sciences.

**DeAndre "Dre" Woods** joined the Counseling department as Senior Student Services Assistant.

**Melanie Cordero** accepted an acting Student Services Technician assignment at Mesa College for the fall 2023 semester. Melanie started on August 14 at Mesa's "The Stand" in Student Services, which is equivalent to Miramar's Jet Fuel Resource Center.

**Dr. Matthew Cain** has been selected as the Dual Enrollment and CCAP (College and Career Access Pathways) Coordinator.

**Joseph Carletello** joined Miramar College as Network Specialist in January.

**Kurt Hill**, who moved into a management role, stepped down as Miramar's Classified Senate President in August 2023. He handed over the reins Senate Vice President, **Malia Kunst**. Kunst began serving as Miramar College Classified Senate President on August 16, 2023.

**Marco Palombo** joins Miramar College as Athletic Equipment Attendant.

**John Ramirez** is our new Miramar Chef Manager. Company Kitchen (Compass Group), our Food Services Partner, provides services to Miramar Café, Jet Stop C store, and catering operations. John has worked with Compass for more than 15 years and has been an Executive Chef and Restaurant and Catering Manager throughout his career.

**Blake Seits** joins Miramar College as Athletic Equipment Attendant.

# PEOPLE

**Lisa E. Muñoz** was selected for the Miramar Faculty Technology Liaison position.

After 6+ years working in Student Accounting, **Robert Spatafore** left Miramar College for a new accounting position.

**Doris Nwosu** has joined Miramar College as a full-time Nurse Practitioner in Student Health Services.

**Maribel Q. Flores** joins Miramar College as the HSI STEM Éxito and MESA Program Administrative Assistant III.

After 33 years of service, **Lonnie Pham** has retired. Here final day was May 30, 2024.

**Jennifer Aase** served as the Interim Counseling Department Chair for the remainder of the 2023-2025 term.

**Andy Soukkeo** has been hired as the College's Stockroom Clerk

*in loving memory*

## Sam Shostray

Longtime Miramar College employee Sam Shostray passed away on Dec. 31, 2023. Sam was a valued member of the EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs team since 2007. Prior to that, he served as an Instructional Assistant from 2000-2007. Additionally, he served as a leader with Classified Senate for several years.

Sam's positive personality, sense of humor and commitment to students will be missed by the campus community, and especially those who have had the pleasure of working closely with him. Sam was well-liked by all who knew him, and his contributions to the culture and community of Miramar cannot be overstated. ■



## Larry Cooke

Former Fire Tech Professor Larry Cooke passed away Oct. 3 after a recurring 5-year battle with leukemia.

Larry passed peacefully according to his wishes.

If you knew Larry, you knew he was an extraordinary man of many dimensions. He was a man of faith who felt things deeply and lived life with passion.

Larry was an Army and Coast Guard Reserve veteran, Hoover High graduate, retired SDFD firefighter and professor of Fire Science at Miramar College where he and his beloved golden retriever, Ember, were fixtures on the campus. ■



## 3 DSPS ALUMNI AT WORK



### Cassandra Mullens Illustrates Path to Success

Welcome to DSPS Alumni at Work, where we celebrate former SDCCD students and highlight how their partnership with Disability Support Programs and Services helped pave successful employment pathways. Today, we share an interview with Miramar College alum Cassandra Mullens.

#### A Welcoming Transition Point

When reflecting on her decision to pursue higher education after graduating from Mount Carmel High School in 2016, Mullens described Miramar as “a flexible and welcoming transition point from high school life to university life.” Seeking to develop her skills as a character designer and illustrator, Mullens pursued her associate’s degree in Studio Arts for Transfer, honing her skills in life drawing, painting, ceramics, and woodwork. Spending most of her time in the Art and Visual Studies building, she found guidance in professors Jessica McCambley and Joshua Eggleton.

“[They] provided helpful feedback and encouraged me to step outside my comfort zone when it came to the style and methods of my pieces,” she said.

#### Keeping a Steady Pace

As a student on the Autism spectrum, Mullens’ difficulty processing vast quantities of information and multiple steps given at once often resulted in overwhelm and overstimulation.

“This also affected my manual dexterity and spatial perception, making drawing proportionally a major challenge,” she said.

With support from Miramar College DSPS, Mullens accessed a wealth of resources and accommodations to achieve a rhythm that worked for her.

“The high-tech center provided a quiet, steady-paced environment where I could improve my focus on tasks and time management,” she said, while “the use of a DSPS recorder helped me retain information and discern how to concisely take notes.”

Mullens also expressed gratitude for the individualized support she received from DSPS staff, who were not only invested in her academic journey but also in her successful transition into the workforce. She credits her counselor Kandice Brandt with providing “invaluable advice and encouragement throughout my entire time at Miramar, which contributed greatly to my academic success” as well

# ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

as WorkAbility III Vocational Specialist Rusty Krumm, who “went above and beyond to help develop my interview skills and resume.”

## More Than Capable

After her time at Miramar, Mullens continued her studies at San Diego State University, where she graduated summa cum laude in May 2023 with a bachelor's degree in Applied Arts and Sciences with an emphasis in Multimedia. She is currently working as an assistant graphic designer for Little Fish Comic Book Studio, a nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching children and teens how to create their own comics. Her role involves creating illustrations for social media advertisements and assisting in teaching comic workshops.

“I am very fortunate to have continued to receive guidance from SDSU's alumni services and the Department of Rehabilitation,” said Mullens. “They have helped to direct my area of focus in graphic design companies to apply for and which aspects of my experience as an artist to emphasize in my resume and portfolio.”

In her role at Little Fish, Mullens embraces every opportunity to innovate.

“For each new project I’m given, a million and one ideas sprout into my head. It’s incredibly satisfying to see how the illustrations I draft on paper take on a new life when digital coloring and text is applied. Sometimes it’s a one-to-one transfer of the original sketch while other times I discover a new element or color combination that works even better.”

As for navigating some of the common workplace barriers autistic employees face, Mullens knows exactly what she needs: “So long as I receive patient and clear instructions one-on-one and have access to a small-scale setting to produce my art, I’m more than capable of thriving.”

## Words of Wisdom

We asked Mullens for any words of wisdom she might provide to prospective SDCCD students with disabilities looking to further their education and employment prospects.

“Self-advocacy and reaching out is the key to ensuring that you can get the accommodations to help you thrive in the classroom,” she said. “Every student with disabilities deserves to have a strong support system that builds them up so they can cultivate their talents and succeed in their fields.”

Mullens also emphasized the need for increased opportunities in the arts specifically, noting the many instances where she and her college counselors had to “dig for those.”

On a broader accessibility level, Mullens (whose disability prohibits her from driving) advocates for low-cost subsidized ride services to help reduce the stress and unpredictability associated with public transportation.

## Never Stop Fighting

As Mullens works toward becoming a character designer with an emphasis in creature design, she’s also partnering with another nonprofit to develop entrepreneurial skills, sell her art, and create her own studio. In her spare time, she enjoys reading books (zoology, paleontology, mythology and animation) and dabbles in baking - chocolate chip cookies are her specialty!

In closing, Mullens wants readers to know that she tries to live life in accordance with this E.E Cummings passage from “A Poet’s Advice to Students”:

*To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle you are ever going to fight. Never stop fighting.*

DSPS is in your corner, Cassandra! (Though we strive alongside alumni like you to create a different kind of world with fewer battles to fight and more cookies to bake!)

If you are a SDCCD student with a disability looking for academic and/or vocational support please visit DSPS to learn about the programs we offer! ■



## Under the Hood with John Loewenberg

John Loewenberg, a Miramar College student who is now a vital part of the college's Automotive Technology Program as an Instructional Laboratory Technician.

### Test Driving College

Loewenberg's love for the automotive world began early, and he knew he wanted to turn his passion into a career. After graduating from Poway High School in 2010, he embarked on his higher education journey at Miramar College in 2011. He chose Miramar because of its cost-effective tuition and the academic flexibility it offered. He was

eager to test drive various subjects while remaining committed to his true passion: automotive technology.

Loewenberg fondly remembers his first years at Miramar, citing Mark Anderson's Health 101 class as a particular highlight.

"He made his class atmosphere fun and lighthearted, which made learning easy, especially since I was nervous about being at a new school," said Loewenberg, who also noted the professor's incredible support in providing disability accommodations.

### Navigating Roadblocks

Loewenberg, who has a social anxiety disorder, described how even the simplest academic and social interactions felt like daunting challenges. Group projects, speaking in class, and making friends, for example, all felt like "navigating a minefield."

"Every time you have to interact," he said, "there was this nagging fear of being judged or saying the wrong thing."

The anxiety wasn't just in his head; it brought physical symptoms like shaky hands and a racing heart. At first, these challenges negatively impacted Loewenberg's academic performance.

"My grades took a hit because I'd sometimes avoid classes or group study sessions, just to steer clear of those anxiety-inducing situations."

Fortunately, he recalled, Miramar faculty and staff recognized the obstacles in Loewenberg's path and "offered the support, counseling, and resources to help students like me get through it."

### Preparing for the Road Ahead

Tapping into student services like Miramar DSPS not only enhanced Loewenberg's academic success; it prepared him for the workforce.

After completing the two-year Honda PACT program at Miramar College in 2013, Loewenberg transitioned to a full-time position at Hoehn Honda in Carlsbad. In 2016, Miramar College welcomed him as an Instructional Lab Technician, where he subsequently achieved his ASE Master Technician status.

### From the Driver's Seat

Loewenberg finds his role at Miramar incredibly rewarding. He enjoys teaching students and takes pride in witnessing them grasp challenging concepts.

**“DISABILITY SUPPORT DOESN'T JUST HELP IN SCHOOL; IT SETS YOU UP WITH SKILLS THAT ASSIST IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE,”** he said. **“THESE SERVICES [TEACH STUDENTS TO] SPEAK UP FOR THEMSELVES, GET HANDS-ON WITH ASSISTIVE TECH TOOLS, GET TO PRACTICE TIME MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION. IF YOU’RE EVER TORN ABOUT DISCLOSING YOUR DISABILITY AT WORK, THE EXPERIENCES WITH THESE SERVICES CAN GUIDE YOU.”**

“It feels good knowing I might have helped in some way. It’s not about grand changes, but those tiny steps of progress,” he said.

When asked how he might advise prospective students with disabilities, Loewenberg encourages a trifecta approach of self-advocacy, self-care, and celebration.

“Don't be afraid to seek out the accommodations you need and lean on them,” he said, adding that DSPS representatives can offer insights, tips, and that comforting feeling of not being alone. “Remember to prioritize self-care; it's not just a buzzword. Taking breaks, finding relaxing activities, or even seeking counseling can be great outlets. Lastly, always remind yourself of your achievements, no matter how small. Every step forward is a victory. With determination and the right support, you've got this!”

As for students transitioning into the workforce, Loewenberg believes that companies should prioritize understanding and compassion.

“I've seen instances where profit and efficiency overshadow human compassion and understanding,” he said. “It's disheartening to think of others who might feel overwhelmed or excluded. It's essential for companies not only to make physical accommodations but also to foster a culture that values every individual's contribution, recognizing the strength in diversity.”

No matter what students face in the classroom and beyond, Loewenberg wants them to know they can reach out to him for support.

**On the Horizon**

Outside the classroom, Loewenberg loves spending quality time with his dad in the garage, continuing the family tradition of tinkering on 1960's Chevy hot rods.



**“It’s more than just a dive into mechanics or reliving automotive nostalgia,”** he said. **“The time working together has been a binding force, linking me with the wisdom and memories of both my dad and granddad.”**

He hopes to become a father one day, perhaps passing on the wisdom and memories to his own child.

“I'm eager to embrace the mysteries ahead and whatever life has in store for me,” he said.

At DSPS, we're so eager to watch the journey unfold! ■



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## DSPS Alumni at Work: Randy Claros

The DSPS Alumni at Work series showcases the journeys of former San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) students who, with the help of the Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS), have succeeded in their educational and professional paths. In this edition, we're happy to spotlight Randy Claros, a counselor at Miramar College who brings a wealth of experience and passion to his role.

### Embracing Resources

Claros' higher education journey began at San Diego State University, where he initially explored Kinesiology and Social Sciences before choosing Psychology as his major. As a first-generation student with undiagnosed disabilities, navigating the college experience proved quite difficult.

"I felt that I was smart enough for college, but it just didn't click. I wasn't able to manage academically," he said.

After landing on academic probation several times, Claros was eventually disqualified from SDSU. What changed the game was a visit to the ombudsman's office, where he was encouraged to explore the community college route and consider testing for disability services eligibility.

"It was, at that point, a stigma," he said. "But it got to the point where I'm like, 'Okay, I need to start looking into that particular resource.'"

Randy soon discovered that he had auditory processing speed issues and was diagnosed with ADHD. Understanding these challenges allowed him to embrace the resources available to him, which transformed his college experience as he transitioned his studies to Miramar College.

"When I first received my accommodations, I was kind of hesitant," Randy admits. "I didn't know if I wanted to tell my professors about my disability. I didn't know if I deserved these accommodations. I felt like I was cheating the system, but I'm not."

With the support of accommodations and DSPS staff at Miramar, Randy saw a remarkable improvement in his grades and his confidence. He eventually transferred back to SDSU to complete his bachelor's degree in psychology, and went on to San Jose State University to earn his master's, continuing to utilize accommodations along the way.

### Empowering Others

Claros spent nearly a decade as a counselor and instructor at Foothill-De Anza Community College District in Los Altos Hills, CA before returning to San Diego to be near family. In a full circle moment, he joined Miramar College as a counselor and professor in 2016.

"Miramar was the one that solidified my DSPS status," he said. "I wanted to give back to the college that helped me out in my college journey."

Claros' commitment to making a difference for students fuels his dedication at Miramar. His unique insight as a former DSPS student, a first



generation student of color, and member of the LGBTQ+ community allows him to connect with students with potential undisclosed disabilities among other intersecting marginalized identities, guiding them toward proven resources for enhanced success.

**“If I’m vulnerable with students, if I share my own experiences and my multiple identities that I have and how these services help me grow and help me do well, I think hopefully that would impact students as well,” he said.**

**Looking Ahead**

Claros is looking forward to starting a doctorate program at Capella University in January. Despite pursuing an advanced degree and encouragement from colleagues to climb the administrative ladder, his priority is staying “as close to students as possible” to directly affect change in their lives.

Beyond academia, Claros has his sights set on traveling and seizing the opportunity to explore the world. First up is an eastern Mediterranean cruise in 2024, with Asia and South and Central America on the bucket list!

At home and abroad, on campus and off, we wish Randy nothing but smooth sailing in the years to come! ■



Parker Brown

**Men’s Volleyball Alum Wins NCAA Title**

Former Miramar College Jets men’s volleyball player Parker Brown won a Division 3 NCAA Men’s Volleyball Championship on April 28. Parker, a graduate of Scripps Ranch High School, was a part of the Cal Lutheran team that beat Vassar in the national title game. ■

**INCUBATORS: A COMMUNITY BUSINESS INCUBATOR THAT RECENTLY EXPANDED — SAN DIEGO MIRAMAR COLLEGE’S REGIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER REC INNOVATION LAB — WILL BE ABLE TO DO MORE IN HELPING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS GET ROLLING.**



## EDUCATION: REC Innovation Lab Cuts Ribbon on New Facility

By Karen Pearlman | January 22, 2024

San Diego Miramar College’s Regional Entrepreneurship Center REC Innovation Lab is a startup incubator focused on helping women and minority entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds to launch scalable, high growth business startups. And unlike other incubators around San Diego County, the REC Lab is uniquely situated on the community college campus.

At the REC lab, students learn how to take their startup to the next level by acquiring the skills required to pitch investors in hopes of obtaining venture capital to grow their business and receive resources for business and career development, training on cutting-edge technology such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence, the latest tools, and a broad and diverse network of industry experts to support them.

Many of the students are veterans, minorities, women, first-generation college students, and people who would not typically join an incubator without the REC.

In 2020 51% of REC student founders were women, 71% were racial or ethnic minorities, 18% were black, and they range in age from 15 – 72 years.

During the semester, students practice pitching to mentors and real-life Venture Capitalists often gaining valuable feedback that leads to funding.

“Unlike traditional incubators that charge money or take equity, we are able to provide resources through classes,” said Tanya Hertz, executive director of the REC Innovation Lab and associate professor of entrepreneurship at Miramar College. “Entrepreneurs who want help starting a company can sign up for the REC by taking the BUSE 229 class at Miramar College, offered each semester for just \$46 a unit. As long as you have taken a basic



Professor Tanya Hertz, Executive Director of the REC Innovation Lab at Miramar College

Introduction to Entrepreneurship class, then you are eligible to join the REC. If you are ready to join now and have life-experience, we can even waive the prerequisite.”

The lab initially opened online during the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 and was entirely remote, then moved around into classrooms around campus until settling into its own spot last year on the ground floor of the school’s Diesel Technology Building. Miramar College is officially cutting the ribbon on the new REC Lab Jan. 24.

### Small Biz Success Stories



Ruth Young-Loaeza, a former hospital housekeeper who founded NEET SHEETS

Hertz said there are already dozens of the successful businesses that have started because of the program, including hundreds of small food-based businesses and MEHKOs that have gone through the REC as part of the San Diego Food Justice G.E.T. Cooking Program. Last year, a G.E.T. Cooking grant allowed Miramar College to distribute \$750,000 in micro-grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500 to more than 200 program participants in addition to providing them with technical assistance and business education.

# MEDIA EXPOSURE

The REC Lab has helped many local entrepreneurs get going, Hertz said, including Anh Pham, the CEO and Founder of Earth Fan Surf Company, a business that manufactures and sells eco-friendly wood bodyboards, and Ruth Young-Loeza, a former hospital housekeeper who founded NEET SHEETS, a revolutionary bedding innovation that has transformed the way to make beds.



## Hertz said another of the REC Lab's successes has been Alive Ferments LLC.

Founded in 2020 and first launched in 2022 by Italy-born brothers Niccolo and Sasha Frascchetti, Alive Ferments has helped more than 5,000 people improve their gut health by making it easy to integrate probiotic fermented foods into their diets. Their products are in more than 60 natural grocery stores across California and in

Utah, Nevada and Hawaii. Niccolo Frascchetti credited Hertz and the REC program for helping the brothers head in the right direction.

"I was able to find a supportive environment where we learned how to do things hands-on instead of just in theory," he said. "A lot of it was demystifying everything that it seemed like we couldn't do ourselves and felt like we had to pay someone else to do it. That wasn't the case. Tanya would say, 'This is how you do it. I'm not doing it for you, but I'll show you how to do it.'"

The business has grown its revenue by almost 40% in 2023 compared to 2022. Currently bootstrapped with no debt, he said Alive Ferments is looking to acquire investment to expand to other distribution networks and increase online sales. Frascchetti said the company is currently seeking investors who are aligned with its values and goals: "Promoting healthy, sustainable and innovative food products to share with the world."

"We are looking to bring influential individuals or organizations on board from the industry who can contribute their expertise and connections to further enhance the company's growth and success," he said. The Frascchettis' journey into the culinary world began with a deep-rooted appreciation for wholesome food and a commitment to preserving local traditions, Sasha Frascchetti said.

"Growing up in rural Tuscany, our family always prioritized nourishing meals prepared from scratch," he said. "This was a time when the older generations were starting to embrace processed and refined foods as a sign of progress, while simultaneously cherishing their love for traditional local cuisine. This stark contrast ignited our desire to bridge the gap between these two worlds."



## REC Lab Student Featured by CBS8

On the heels of the grand opening of the REC Innovation Lab, CBS 8 did a feature on student Anh Pham, who was one of the student pitchers during the ribbon cutting event held in January 2024. Anh runs Earth Fan Surf Company which makes eco-friendly wooden boards for body surfing. View the story here: [youtu.be/sJMiVygWh8o](https://youtu.be/sJMiVygWh8o)

## AMR-Miramar College Partnership Featured on CBS8



A partnership between AMR and Miramar College, the Earn While You Learn academy is a 16-week program in which cadets will be trained to become emergency medical technicians (EMT) and will be hired by AMR upon completing the academy and passing a national EMT exam, known as the Registry of EMT's exam. The Academy garnered coverage on several local stations. Here is a story produced by CBS 8. [youtube.com/watch?v=iWU-QOkTDMI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWU-QOkTDMI): AMR offering free EMT training academy for women



## 10 News Features Miramar College Basic Needs Programs

10 News was on campus April 26 to examine the basic needs programs supported by Miramar College. The station profiled student Nomad Pallek and his struggle to overcome homelessness and food insecurity as a community college student. Here is the story [youtube.com/watch?v=1IMq4uy\\_ieQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IMq4uy_ieQ)

## For the Love of Volleyball and the Classroom



A Miramar College beach volleyball trio completed 87 units of college classes between two different schools this past spring for the love of volleyball. Their story was told by KUSI-TV on June 3, 2024. Here is the story [youtube.com/watch?v=SblZ5pHkNLY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SblZ5pHkNLY)

## PATH Program Featured in CC Daily



The Miramar College PATH program and its graduate, Calvin Hill, were featured in a July article by Community College Daily. Here is the article [ccdaily.com/2023/07/a-renewed-appreciation-for-the-humanities](https://www.ccdaily.com/2023/07/a-renewed-appreciation-for-the-humanities)



## Fox 5 Features Yoga and Fitness Training Program

Miramar College's Yoga and Personal Training program was featured on Fox 5's The Localist. Here is the story [youtube.com/watch?v=qKhKn7FkKSU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKhKn7FkKSU) The LOCAList at Miramar



## President Lundburg Supreme Court Op-Ed

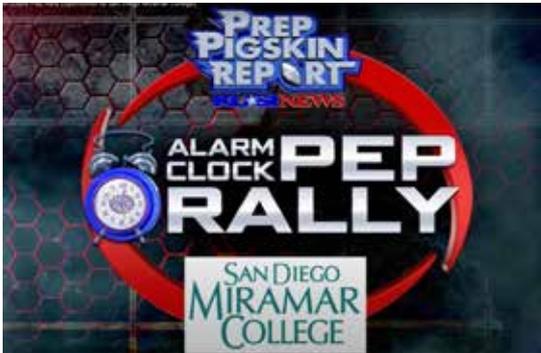
Miramar College President Dr. Wes Lundburg gave his insight into the June 2023 Supreme Court ruling on

Affirmative Action in higher education in a July 23, 2023 Op-Ed piece in the San Diego Union-Tribune. Here is the article [bit.ly/3Asz6Mx](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/story/news/education/2023/07/23/supreme-court-affirmative-action-education/7000000001)



## VP Gonzales Appears on KUSI-TV to Discuss Opening of Fall 2023 Semester

Vice President of Student Services Adrian Gonzales appeared on KUSI's Good Evening San Diego as the lead story to discuss the College's first day back and the impact of the storm. View his appearance here [youtube.com/watch?v=eQDSG0Mo-pY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQDSG0Mo-pY) KUSI-SD: First Day of Classes at Miramar College (Live Coverage)



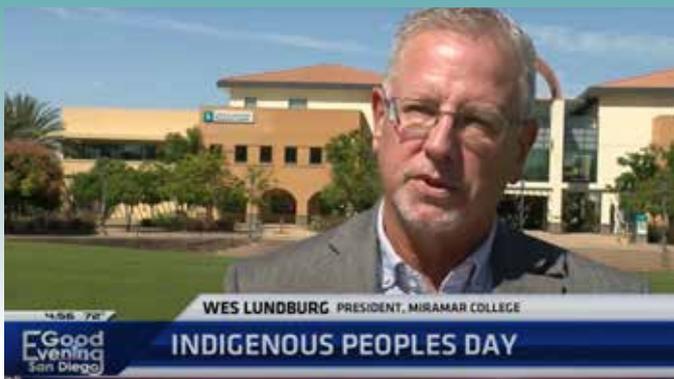
## Alarm Clock Pep Rally Sponsorship

Miramar College has entered into a partnership with KUSI-TV to become the title sponsor of the Alarm Clock Pep Rally for the 2023 high school football season. The Miramar College Alarm Clock Pep Rally aired each Friday morning live on Good Morning San Diego. The pep rally takes place during the high school football season and will rotate locations each Friday. The first Miramar College Pep Rally took place August 18 at Valhalla High School. Here is the story [youtube.com/watch?v=hcxanz-js5sl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcxanz-js5sl) KUSI-SD: PPR Alarm Clock Pep Rally



## Dr. Lundburg Discusses Bounce Back in Enrollment

Miramar College President Dr. Wes Lundburg was quoted in a September 2023 Community College Daily article about the surge in enrollments for the fall 2023 semester. Read the article here [bit.ly/40yNY6Fs](https://www.bit.ly/40yNY6Fs) Two-year enrollments appear to surge this fall - Community College Daily (ccdaily.com)



## Indigenous People's Day Coverage

Miramar College held an Indigenous People's Day on Oct. 9. The Soaring Eagles performed for students. KUSI-TV covered the event for its local newscast.

View story [youtube.com/watch?v=XtS890tMO7M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtS890tMO7M) KUSI-SD: Miramar College Celebrates Indigenous Peoples' Day



## Dr. Judy Patacsil Talks Filipino History with KPBS

KPBS featured Miramar College Professor Dr. Judy Patacsil as it ran a story on the Filipinos of South Bay Exhibit. Watch the November feature [youtube.com/watch?v=EZ2xxjqY2U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZ2xxjqY2U) KPBS-SD: Filipinos of South Bay Exhibit (feat. Miramar Professor Dr. Judy Patacsil), Part 1

## Miramar College Public Safety Op-Ed Piece

Darren Hall, program director for Fire Tech, authored an Op-Ed piece in the Times of San Diego focusing on Miramar College's pursuit to offer a bachelor's degree in Public Safety. The piece ran in October just as it was determined there



were no objections by the Cal State University Academic Senate and the program was advanced for approval by the CCC Board of Governors President. View article [bit.ly/3ACeKQT](https://bit.ly/3ACeKQT)



## Solar Eclipse Coverage

Miramar College hosted a solar eclipse viewing party on April 8. Fox 5 San Diego was on campus to cover the event [youtube.com/watch?v=KtNdvFLNn5A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtNdvFLNn5A) KSWB-SD (FOX): Solar Eclipse Thrills Millions

# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## Creating Impact and Paving the Way Forward

The Miramar College Foundation is deeply grateful for the many enduring community partners whose support transforms lives. Through these generous leaders, meaningful resources get into students' hands helping ensure that no student must sacrifice an education due to financial constraints.

These collaborations create a ripple effect of positive change. Through visibility, advocacy, collaboration, and financial support, our partners bring the mission of the Miramar College Foundation to the consciousness of like-minded individuals and organizations. Too numerous to mention here, below are just a few examples of the impact created by these partnerships.

**SDG&E's** commitment to community has been instrumental in the creation of two key scholarships for students: Vets 2 Jets and SAFE San Diego, benefiting veterans and fire technology students, respectively.

**California Coast Credit Union** Founded by teachers in 1929, California Coast Credit Union's unwavering commitment to education has provided countless opportunities for students, both through their namesake Cal Coast Cares scholarship, as well as their support for the Invest in Success fundraising event.

**UC San Diego** A world-class research and higher education institution, UC San Diego offers the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholarship Program at Miramar College, providing opportunities for students to advance their STEM skills and preparing them for transfer and/or careers in STEM fields.

**Hawthorne Cat** woven into the fabric of Miramar College is Hawthorne Cat, who's most enduring and generous support has changed the lives of countless Diesel Technology students with their scholarship. Their deeply-rooted relationship to the college is plain to see, as the Diesel Technology Building bears the name of their founder, Tom Hawthorne.

**John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)** JBAY's commitment to improving the quality of life for youth who have been in foster care or who have experienced homelessness has paved the way to success for numerous Miramar College students through their grant from the Burton Critical Needs and Opportunity Fund, an initiative that provides direct financial assistance to eligible students.

### The Road Ahead: Expanding Horizons

These partnerships serve as the bedrock of the Miramar College Foundation's work to remove barriers to student access and success. Together we recognize that in addition to financial resources, students need an environment that fosters engagement and belonging. We appreciate our partners' dedication and eagerly anticipate building new collaborations that meet the evolving needs and ambitions of our students, making a profound difference and create a legacy of positive change for years to come.



