

A Message from the Chancellor

Lynn Ceresino Neault, Ed.D.



Celebrating the completion of our stunning Performing and Visual Arts Center at Grossmont College; watching our new three-story Student Services Building begin to rise at Cuyamaca College; redoubling our focus on equity, social justice and anti-racism –

These are just a few of the milestones we achieved at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District during the 2020-2021 academic year. Through the ups and downs of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remained focused on our priorities and values: providing the highest quality services to our students and communities.

As public health guidance evolved, we stayed connected mostly online through remote learning and virtual student services. Most support staff worked off-site for the first half of the year. Innovations included setting up wireless access points in parking lots to accommodate students' internet needs and HyFlex classrooms, which offer both in-person and virtual access. The roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines helped control the spread of the virus, paving the way to partially reopen our campuses in fall 2021.

For a second year, the graduating classes of 2021 at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges celebrated commencement virtually in June. Both colleges added drive-thru processions the day before commencement so that graduates could be cheered and celebrated by family and friends, and their faculty and other college employees who were instrumental in their journey. The smiles and cheers reinforced the importance of engagement on our campuses. Almost 1,790 graduates from the two colleges received more than 4,850 degrees and certificates in virtual ceremonies.

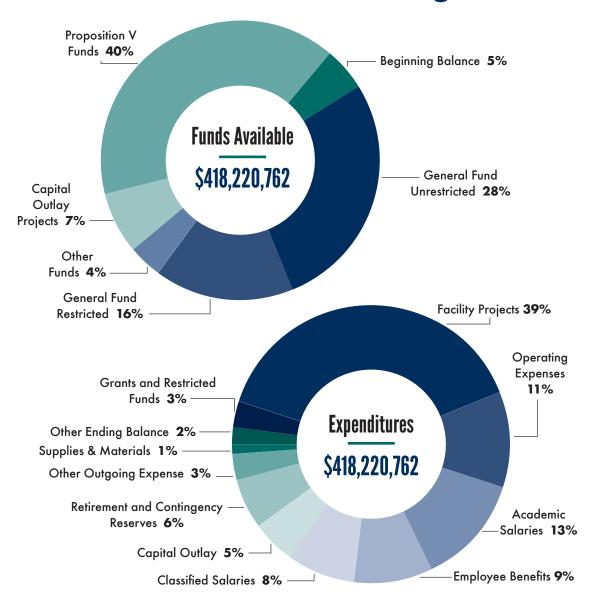
The District also broke ground on Phase 2 of the Science, Math and Career Tech Complex at Grossmont College, and moved ahead with renovation of the Ornamental Horticulture Complex and Building M at Cuyamaca College.

We are deeply grateful to the East County community for supporting and approving construction bonds that made these projects possible. Voters approved the \$398 million Prop. V bond in 2012. We believe the public's investment in our campuses reflects its confidence in the District. A recent economic impact study found our District added more than \$1.1 billion annually to the regional economy.

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District's contributions to the East County community have well exceeded monetary value. Through equity-minded education and training, our colleges enable students in all their diversity to strive and work toward their dreams. This annual report showcases some of our many achievements, successes, and points of pride from 2021.

In a year of continued uncertainty, our District showed once again that **embracing change** is our strength, and the key to helping our students succeed.

2020-21 District Budget



District sets 17-year record for clean audits

For the 17th year in a row, the District received the best marks possible in independent financial audits for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Reports detailed the District's general audit, as well as independent reviews of the financials of the Foundation for Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges, the District's auxiliary, and the management of Proposition V, the \$398 million construction bond approved by East County voters in 2012.

The District received top marks, confirming no deficiencies in reporting or compliance.

A performance audit of Proposition V was conducted to ensure building funds are being spent as promised to taxpayers in the language of the bond. Auditors analyzed 70 percent of all Prop. V transactions and confirmed that the District has properly accounted for all expenditures.

Other examples of the District's good stewardship of public dollars were reflected in the refinancing of \$80 million worth of Prop. V bonds, which is anticipated to save taxpayers \$8 million over the life of the bonds, and an insurance rebate of nearly \$500,000 for effective handling of a workers compensation program.

Student Demographics 2020-2021

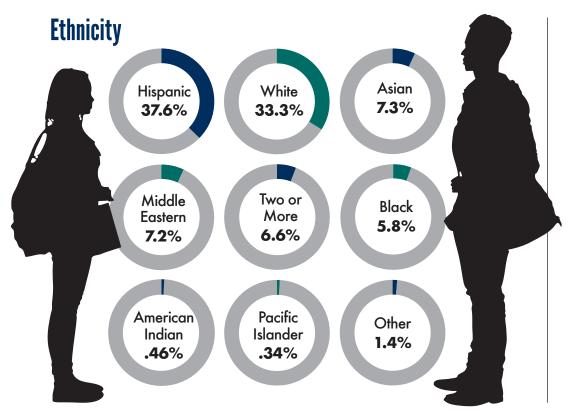
Enrollment

Grossmont: **15,184** Full-time: **60%** Cuyamaca: **8,549** Part-time: **40%**

Gender







Residency

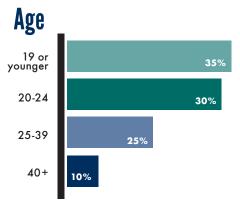
 California Residents
 ... 94.3%

 International
 ... 1.8%

 Non-residents
 ... 1.1%

 Undocumented
 ... 2%

 Other
 ... 8%





Economic Impact Report

College District adds \$1.1 billion to region's economy

An economic impact report found that the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District adds \$1.1 billion each year to the San Diego County economy, providing a dependable stream of skilled employees to the region's workforce and dramatically boosting the lifetime earnings of graduates.

The study was conducted by Emsi, an Idahobased labor market analytics firm. Researchers analyzed data for the 2018-2019 fiscal year to determine the economic impact and return on investment for dollars invested by students in their education, by alumni who live and work in San Diego County, and the impact of the District's operational spending.

GCCCD's **Total Annual Impact**

\$1.1 Billion

Generated Income

14,200 Jobs

Providing substantial benefits to students, taxpayers and society

According to the report, for every dollar invested in the college district, \$10.20 in added income was gained, including reduced government benefits, public sector savings, and unemployment claims.

The analysis also determined that the average associate degree graduate of Grossmont or Cuyamaca College will see annual earnings that are \$9,900 higher than a person with a high school diploma. Over a working lifetime, the benefits of the associate degree over a high school diploma will amount to \$396,000 in higher earnings.

Alumni Impact

The overall economic impact of Grossmont and Cuyamaca College alumni was...

\$810.2 million

in added income

9,128 jobs supported



= 100 jobs

District Operations Spending Impact

The economic impact of District spending for annual payroll and other spending was:

\$237.5 million or added income



Student Spending Impact

The economic impact of student spending was...

\$65.4 million or added income

1,214 jobs supported

Return on Investment

- + For every dollar spent by students for their education at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges, they gained \$6.90 in lifetime earnings.
- For every dollar of public money invested in the college district, taxpayers will receive \$1.40 over the course of students' working lives.

FOR EVERY \$1

00 00

\$6.90 Student gain in lifetime earnings

\$1.40



Taxpayer gain in added tax revenue and public sector savings

Credit students Non-credit students FTE employees The GCCCD service area

About GCCCD

The District provided for students during the pandemic. Here is how...



With the pandemic hitting students hard financially, both Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges held a succession of food distributions. Since October 2020, Grossmont College has partnered with San Diego-based nonprofit Kitchens for Good to provide free, fresh individual meals to more than 200 students each week.

In total, Grossmont's student food pantry, Gizmo's Kitchen (1), provides food for nearly 1,500 students and their families each month.

Cuyamaca College has also held drive-thru pantry distributions each month for students and staff as part of its Cuyamaca Cares program (2). In partnership with Feeding San Diego, the college provided food to about 300 students.

To further help Cuyamaca College students, lab kits (3) were distributed free of charge in November 2020 to students in physics, engineering, astronomy and biology. Intended to provide students with hands-on experience like they would normally receive in an on-campus course, the kits were funded by STEM grant funds and lab budgets.





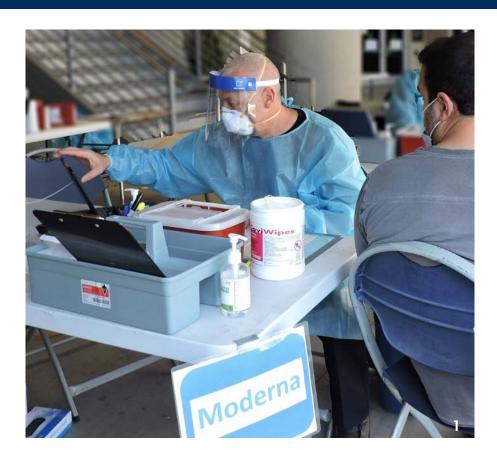




At Grossmont College, a virtual help center debuted in early 2021, serving as a clearinghouse for help-desk assistance with enrollment and registration, financial aid and scholarships. The center also helps students access technology platforms.

In the fall, Cuyamaca College distributed Wi-Fi hotspots (4) to more than 100 students, providing free internet connectivity to complete coursework. In the spring, the library hosted drive-thru events providing students with books, calculators, laptops and more.

How the District served the community during the pandemic...



In keeping with the mission to serve the community at large, both Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges served as COVID-19 vaccination sites (1), providing thousands of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses for free to the public. The vaccination clinics were part of San Diego County's efforts to vaccinate targeted communities such as East County.

Both colleges also stepped up as public polling places (2) for the November election. To help spread the get-out-the-vote message, Grossmont College dance students created a catchy video, "Tap the Vote," featuring former and current students, as well as members of a local tap dance company. Directed and choreographed by dance instructor Nancy Boskin-Mullen, the video showed students tapping their way around the campus and mimicking vote-casting at voting booths and dropping ballots into mailboxes.

Almost as ubiquitous as Zoom meetings and virtual workshops were drive-thru events to help the community such as Grossmont College's partnering with the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council for a food distribution (3) in the spring. There, dozens of volunteers from the college served local families in need. Held in partnership with

Feeding San Diego, the event was the Labor Council's first East County food distribution.

Grossmont College also partnered with the County of San Diego to offer a drive-thru flu clinic for the public (4).

In partnership with Our Mother of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in El Cajon, Cuyamaca College volunteers served hundreds of hot meals to the community's homeless population.

Cuyamaca College's support of the community continued in the spring with laptop distributions (5) for Latinx middle and high school students who took part in an Encuentros Leadership and Education Summit presented by the college. The laptops were purchased with funds donated by local business and service groups.









Highlights 2020-2021 Cuyamaca College



▲ Julianna Barnes, Ed.D



Program for high school English learners recognized

Cuyamaca College collaborated with Mountain Empire High School to support Spanish speakers who are learning to speak English. The partnership was highlighted by JFF, a national nonprofit that promotes innovative solutions to create access to economic advancement. Nearly all of the rural high school's English learners, who take college English as a Second Language courses while in high school, earn college credit by graduation.

Culture & Community Circle

"Culture & Community Circle" workshops were held throughout the year to explore numerous political and cultural topics ranging from women's voting rights to the racial and economic disparities surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshops were offered via Zoom and were open to students and the public.

Cuyamaca's Youngest Graduates "Cross the Bridge"

In July 2020, the Cuyamaca College Child Development Center hosted a socially-distanced "Crossing the Bridge" ceremony for children moving on to kindergarten (1). Instead of crossing over a wooden bridge at the center's playground, more than 20 families participated in a drive-thru parade celebration in the Cuyamaca College parking lot. Staff lined the route with celebratory signs and decorations, and cheered for each student as they drove past. At the end of the route, families received a certificate of completion and a small gift for the child.







Encuentros Leadership Workshop

Cuyamaca College held its annual Encuentros Leadership and Education Summit in March 2021 (2). The Summit seeks to reduce high school dropout rates and promote college attendance for Latinx middle and high school male students. About 100 families participated in the virtual workshops and food drive.

Phi Theta Kappa Students receive statewide recognition

Two Cuyamaca College students, Shabnam Habibi and Imelda Hernandez-Villa, were named to the 2021 Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society's All-California Academic Team. Team members are recognized for achievement inside and outside the classroom, and represent the top students in California's community colleges.

Counselor named Woman of Distinction

Articulation Officer/Counselor Ticey Hosley, Ph.D., was honored with the "2020 Woman of Distinction Award" from Women, Inc. (3). She was nominated by the Rady Children's Hospital Auxiliary, where she volunteers as a board member. Women, Inc. is a San Diego organization that celebrates the contributions of African American women and supports students in the region.

Goats clear brush and mitigate fire fuel

After nearly 10 weeks on campus starting in October 2020, 300 goats completed their task, working to mitigate blight and fire danger by clearing dry brush. The fourlegged workers ate their way throught more than 50 of the 165 acres of the campus, leading to an 80 percent cost savings over traditional means (4).

Highlights 2020-2021 Grossmont College



▲ Denise Whisenhunt

The 2020-21 academic year was a time of change for Grossmont College's leadership. After more than five years as college president, Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, retired in December 2020. Marsha Gable, Vice President for Student Services, served as interim president during the spring semester. Denise Whisenhunt, previously Vice President of Student Services at San Diego City College, began serving as Grossmont College's president beginning July 1.

Grossmont College recognized statewide for increasing transfer degrees

For the third year in a row, Grossmont College was recognized as a Champion of Higher Education in 2020 by the Campaign for College Opportunity for its work to significantly increase the number of students earning an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), an associate degree that guarantees transfer to a California State University.

Grossmont College was recognized for having one of the highest rates of ADT conferrals in the state for the 2018-2019 school year, ranking 12th out of the 116 California community colleges. Grossmont College was among 12 community colleges selected from throughout California, and the only community college in San Diego and Imperial counties honored.

Grossmont College among top 50 community colleges in the U.S.

Grossmont College was ranked as one of the top 50 best community colleges in the U.S. for 2021 by Value Colleges, an independent guide to the best values in higher education. The colleges were ranked on factors that include cost and student satisfaction. Grossmont College was also recognized in 2020 as a Top 100 associate degree-awarding college for minorities by Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, ranking 69th across the nation.

Audio production receives award

The Broadcast Education Association, an international professional association for broadcast professionals and educators, announced during its 2021 virtual conference that Media Communications Professor Evan C. Wirig and Sr. Electronics Technician Brian Cantarini won Second Place/Award of Excellence for their Long Form Audio Production of the 250th Anniversary of Beethoven Festival. Wirig and Cantarini recorded, engineered and produced classical music performances by the Grossmont Symphony Orchestra.





Media Communications student wins film competition

Steve Pollard, a Media Communications student, was recognized with an international film award for his final project (1), "Sky Art at Borrego Springs." Pollard won in the Super Short Documentary category in the Sweden Film Awards, an international monthly film competition. Pollard's film features drone footage of the Ricardo Breceda's large metal sculptures in Borrego Springs' Galleta Meadows Estates.

Virtual Dance Concert

In November, the Dance Department launched a virtual version of its annual "Exits and Entrances" dance concert. The YouTube series includes seven videos showcasing ballet, contemporary, hip hop, improv, jazz, modern, and tap dance performances choreographed by department faculty. All dancers are current students.

Visual Arts and Humanities Department join together

In summer 2020, Grossmont College Visual Arts and Humanities Department faculty, students and alumni joined together to help paint murals in downtown La Mesa following the protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. Led by Art Professor Jennifer Bennett, the group painted several murals downtown to beautify damaged buildings and promote the program's current online offerings.

Digital Exhibition

Hyde Art Gallery held its first-ever digital exhibition, "HOME • MADE," in late 2020 featuring student art created during the fall 2020 semester. The digital exhibition highlighted exciting and innovative art and design projects.

Sycuan's support benefits Grossmont College students

Grossmont College and the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges celebrated receiving \$6,000 from the Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation (2) to fund \$500 in scholarships to 12 students for the 2021-2022 academic year. In addition to funds, the students majoring in Culinary Arts, the Administration of Justice, or Hospitality and Tourism Management receive an open-ended job offer for positions including chefs, security guards, or hotel and casino managers after completing their education.

The tribe has also supported Grossmont College through a donation of \$16,000 in cookware for in the Culinary Arts program, along with a \$2,000 donation to the college's food pantry.

Emergency Aid Grants

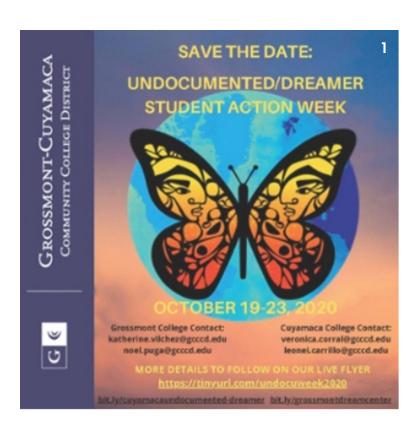
By mid-August 2020, more than \$500,000 in Emergency Aid Grants from the state had been awarded to students.

That month, more than 250 Chromebooks were also distributed to students currently enrolled in categorical programs, such as EOPS, CARE, CalWORKs, and NextUp foster youth. Faculty, staff and administrators distributed the laptops (3). For many families, the Chromebook may be the only available computer in their home.





Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Action



The District deepened its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the 2020-2021 academic year, examining the structures that contribute to institutional racism and developing plans to make actionable changes.

The commitment was led by the District's Governing Board, which passed resolutions affirming the District's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; a resolution recognizing Undocumented Student Action Week in October (1); and resolutions condemning hate crimes perpetrated against Asian Americans.

Governing Board members also participated in numerous workshops promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, on topics addressing racial equity through the lens of the District's planning effort, the role of financial aid in increasing student access, success and equity, and a review of student success in Fall 2020 through an equity lens.

The District is also addressing issues of underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in its hiring, and is developing action plans to create more inclusive classrooms and an anti-racist curriculum.



Grossmont College ranked No. 55 in the country for the number of associate degrees awarded to Hispanic, or Latinx, students, according to the Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine's Top 100 Colleges and Universities for Hispanics list for 2020 (2). The college was also recognized in the national magazine as No. 65 in the country for Latinx student enrollment during the 2018-19 academic year.

Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine annually produces the national ranking that analyzes data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Set (IPEDS) collected by the National Center for Education Statistics, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education. During the 2018 – 2019 academic year, Grossmont College awarded 2,561 associate degrees, with 817 awarded to students who identified as Hispanic or Latinx. That academic year, 36 percent of Grossmont College's 17,835 students identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

Mallory Webb's life has taken her from abuse and homelessness to a bright future as a Cuyamaca College graduate and political science major at UC San Diego.

The freshly minted Cuyamaca College grad first came to the college in 2017 after a troubled homelife, unsure of her future.

"I was abused from the time I was 11 to 18 basically," said Webb, a Houston native raised in San Diego. "I came to Cuyamaca as a homeless student. I met staff in EOPS and they helped me with programs and funds for school and supplies that helped me get on my feet and into a housing program."

The first in her family to earn a college degree, Webb said she considers Cuyamaca College in 2017 the safe haven she needed to progress in her life.

"I went to several community colleges to see where I wanted to go, but ultimately chose Cuyamaca because they made me feel safe and communicated with me very often, met with me every semester multiple times and made sure I didn't fall behind," said Webb, who graduated in June 2021 with associate degrees in political science and social behavioral science.

One program in particular – Umoja – provided a community for Webb and helped her flourish. Through Umoja,



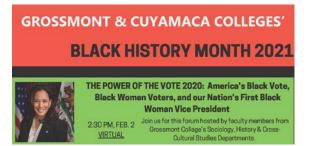
▲ Umoja student Mallory Webb

a college support program for underserved students, she went on tours to HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and UC campuses, which inspired her to look toward continuing her educational beyond Cuyamaca College.

"Through Umoja, I met with counselors who were not only engaged with academics, but helped with resources in my personal life and advocated for me on campus," Webb said.

It's because of Umoja that Webb now works as a case manager for a San Diego-based nonprofit, Home Start, Inc., which is dedicated to ending child abuse. Her experience at Home Start has inspired Webb to a long-term goal to develop a nonprofit program to house homeless youth.

Celebrating Diversity in Virtual Ways

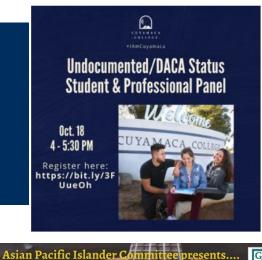




Diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation are celebrated through numerous events held throughout the academic year, including Cuyamaca College's Powwow; Grossmont College's Dia de Familia and Arab American Heritage Month; LGBTQIA events hosted by both colleges' sexual orientation/gender identity student organizations and both colleges' Women's History Month, Latinx Heritage Month and Black History Month events.

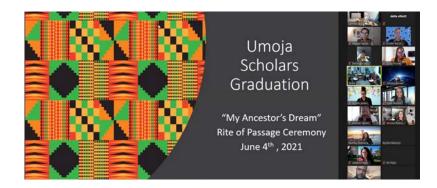
Grossmont College's Black History Month offerings included a panel co-hosted by Cross-Cultural Studies, Sociology and History faculty on "The Power of the Vote 2020: America's Black Vote, Black Women Voters, and our Nation's First Black Woman Vice President."

May marked national Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, and Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges hosted a series of virtual events, including an AAPI Read-in and a variety of workshops and presentations. The slate of events were especially timely after the Senate's passage in spring 2021 of a landmark anti-Asian hate crimes bill. Following the trauma of the past year, the Grossmont College's AAPI Committee decided to change its focus to lighter fare to pay homage to the generations who have added to the nation's rich tapestry and multicultural success.









Cuyamaca College's celebration of Middle Eastern Heritage Month through its Culture and Community Circle workshops featured presentations on Middle Eastern art and history and a College Hour event covering issues involving Chaldeans in the United States and in San Diego. Also at Cuyamaca College, the second annual Black Consciousness Conference was held virtually in October 2020. The event highlighted current issues of social injustice, showcased the work of local activists and students, and connected students to local organizations actively engaging in social justice efforts. The conference was presented by Umoja Scholars in conjunction with the Annual Social Justice Conference.

Proposition V: Investing in Our Campuses



Cuyamaca College's Ornamental Horticulture Complex and Building M Renovation (1), completed in September 2021, highlighted the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District's \$398 million Proposition V construction bond program over the past year. Credited with enabling the transformation of the two colleges into state-of-the-art sites of higher learning, Proposition V was passed by East County voters in 2012. Prop. V continues the work started by Prop. R, a \$207 million bond passed in 2002 that was a key funding source for 13 major facilities at the two campuses.

The approximately \$19 million Ornamental Horticulture project consisted of gutting the existing building and installing upgraded classroom and lab spaces, as well as adding a new greenhouse (2) equipped with high-tech environmental control and irrigation features, a maintenance and storage building, a sales building, and other spaces to meet program requirements. About 10,000 square feet of space was added.



Cuyamaca College also broke ground in December 2020 on a new, three-story Student Services Building (3) that promises to be a welcoming gateway to the campus and a central, go-to location for students to get help in multiple ways. The estimated \$34 million project

includes a 36,000-square-foot center for students to engage and receive support services, such as counseling, financial aid, admissions, disability support, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services, and CalWORKS.

At Grossmont College, a May 2021 ribbon-cutting celebrated the completion of the Performing and Visual Arts Center (PVAC) (4), a landmark structure on the El Cajon campus.

The \$44 Grossmont College PVAC is the first of several facilities that will be part the college's Arts and Communication Complex.

The 38,680-square-foot PVAC includes a 390-seat performance hall with a professional performance stage, orchestra pit and balcony, and will be a beacon for the community. It will also serve as a learning laboratory for student performers, technicians and designers. Dressing rooms, a green room, a costume area and a makeup classroom are also included, as well as space for the new Hyde Art Gallery.

A Science, Math and Career Tech Complex (5) is another Prop. V highlight at Grossmont College. Phase 1 of the project was completed in March 2020 and consisted of the renovation of Building 31, one of the original Grossmont College buildings opened in 1963. The \$13.2 million renovation houses the Administration of Justice program with a new fingerprinting lab (6) and armory; Earth Science programs, Child Development Center, math classrooms and a computer lab.









Commencement / Drive-thru Graduation

Celebrations honored about 1,800 **Grossmont and** Cuyamaca College graduates



Chancellor Lynn Neault A

The graduating classes of 2021 at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges held commencements virtually, with drive-thru processions on preceding days for more jovial - but still safe - celebrations. With many earning multiple degrees and certificates, some 1,790 graduates from the two colleges received 4,854 degrees and certificates in virtual ceremonies held in June.

Because of COVID-19 safety protocols, the colleges opted for online commencements. The drive-thru events allowed graduates to dress in their regalia, decorate their cars, and be photographed and congratulated by faculty and staff along the route.

Chancellor Lynn Neault said the resiliency of students, the commitment of faculty to keep on-line classes engaging and the determination of administrators and staff to provide exemplary service have been remarkable.

"The perseverance of our graduates is reflected in every degree and certificate earned," Neault said.

Each college selected a student speaker to address their fellow graduates.

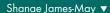
Melissa Shields is proof that all things are possible for those who believe in themselves, especially when they work hard and get the support they need to succeed. At age 53, the Grossmont College student commencement speaker is a first-generation college graduate.

Shields graduated from Grossmont College with an associate degree in wellness and self-development with plans to transfer to San Diego State University to pursue a bachelor's degree in Africana Studies.

Cuyamaca College student speaker Shanae James-May graduated with degrees in Communications and Behavioral Science with plans to transfer to San Diego State University to pursue a degree in Urban Planning and Development.

Like many college students, in her five years at Cuyamaca College, James-May juggled a full-time job, a family with small children, school, and community volunteer work. A Lemon Grove resident, James-May is deeply committed to her community as a community garden volunteer and supporter of Thrive Lemon Grove.









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Profiles of Success: Scholarship Winners



Cuyamaca College Natalia Blake

Plans to pursue a career in the water industry

Born and raised in Tijuana, Natalia Blake moved to San Diego three years ago to explore new opportunities. At Cuyamaca College, she found the answer to what she wanted to do with her life.

Blake, who already has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the State University of Baja California, said that background melds perfectly with her plans to pursue a career in the water industry. She started at Cuyamaca College last spring and is working toward an associate degree in Water and Wastewater Treatment

The honor student, who has a perfect 4.0 grade point average, was awarded the Otay Water District's Watton Scholarship, a \$500 award for top students in Cuyamaca's Center for Water Studies program.

"As a chemist, there are many fields that I can contribute to in society, but none makes more sense than helping my community by working in the water industry," she said, adding that she sees a career in water treatment and distribution.

A hardscrabble life in Mexico, where her father used to cross the border daily to work as a landscaper and gardener in La Jolla and her mother worked at a daycare center, is what's behind Blake's motivation of community service.

Cuyamaca College's diversity and its overall focus on sustainability immediately appealed to Blake. She also has high praise for the water studies program, saying that students benefit from the knowledge and practical experience of instructors who work in the industry.



Grossmont College Robert White

Plans on getting a job soon as an occupational therapist

Robert White's goal of working as an occupational therapy assistant with children who have special needs has been challenged by the pandemic.

While taking classes at Grossmont College, White had been handling a caseload of young clients so he could support himself and his new wife. When the pandemic hit, his caseload was cut in half and his earnings were dramatically reduced.

White said the scholarships he received through the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges helped him stay in school and pay his bills.

White, 35, already earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Brockport and was working with special-needs children when he decided to move to San Diego 10 years ago. He enrolled in the occupational therapy assistant program at Grossmont College after seeing the work that occupational therapists did with children.

White plans to graduate in June after completing his fieldwork for his degree in the spring semester. He praised his experience at Grossmont College.

"It's been fantastic." White said. "I could not say enough about my professors and how much they care about us as students"



Cuyamaca College Caitlyn **Bullert**

Plans on attending San Diego State University in Spring

Caitlyn Bullert had hit bottom. Unemployed, formerly homeless and a recovering alcoholic, the 53-year-old Spring Valley resident found hope at Cuyamaca College.

"Invaluable." Bullert said of the Rancho San Diego campus. "Just totally changed my life."

Indeed, the one-time college dropout is on track to graduate in Fall 2021 with an associate degree in social work. Bullert is aiming to transfer to San Diego State University the following spring en route to a master's degree and a career working with those struggling with the same demons she conquered.

"I want to help people because I know what it feels like to be there," said the vice president of the Cuyamaca College Phi Theta Kappa honors society, who is holding down a 3.7 grade point average. Her academic achievements were recently recognized by the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges with a California Coast Credit Union Scholarship of \$500.

Born and raised in rural Minnesota, Bullert enrolled at the University of Minnesota after graduating high school, but dropped out of college in her first year, joined the Army and suffered bouts of depression and homelessness. She moved to California when she was 31, first to San Jose, then to San Diego and enrolled at Cuyamaca College in the summer of 2019. She hasn't looked back since.



Grossmont College Danna Yunis

Attending San Diego State University in Fall

Danna Yunis was heartbroken after her father - her best friend - passed away in 2018. Her comeback began when she resolved to heed his urgings in pursuing an education and earning a degree from his alma mater.

"I drove to Grossmont College, completely in tears, because that's where he went to school," Yunis said. "I had suffered a tremendous loss, I was very depressed and I needed to do something, to move forward, to have something to look forward to."

Two years after enrolling, Yunis has something else to look forward to: she transfers this fall to San Diego State University - another school her father attended - for a bachelor's degree in rhetoric. She plans to go for a master's degree in creative writing and hopes for a career as a community college professor.

She credits Grossmont College for supporting her in the first steps on her journey.

"The instructors at Grossmont have a passion for teaching," said Yunis, who received a 4.0 grade point average in fall 2020. "It's not just a job for them. They inspire you. They have people there helping you every step of the way, whatever it takes, whatever you need."

Yunis' academic achievements resulted in her receiving the Del Hood Scholarship from the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges.

Recognizing Employee Excellence

















- 1. Sue Gonda
- 2. Craig Milgrim
- 3. Keenan Murray
- 4. Christina Burnett
- 5. Karen Marrujo
- 6. Anaid Stere-Lugo
- 7. MariaDenise "Dee" Aceves
- 8. Jacob Angelo

Top Faculty Awards

Noted for their passion for teaching and as stalwart advocates for students, four instructors at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges received top faculty awards last fall.

The Distinguished Faculty awards for history instructor Sue Gonda and biology professor Craig Milgrim were announced at Grossmont College's convocation, as were the Outstanding Faculty awards at Cuyamaca College for physics instructor Keenan Murray and biology instructor Christina Burnett. Gonda and Milgrim tied for their awards, a first for Grossmont College faculty. Murray is the winner of the Outstanding Faculty Award for full-time faculty, while Burnett won the award for adjunct faculty. The four were also presented in March with the League for Innovation Excellence Awards.

For spring 2021, Cuyamaca College English instructor Karen Marrujo, who brings to the classroom equity and social justice issues, received the 2021 Outstanding Faculty Member Award. Spanish instructor Anaid Stere-Lugo, recognized for finding ways to save students hundreds of dollars in textbook costs, was the part-time faculty recipient of the same award.

At Grossmont College, counselor MariaDenise "Dee" Aceves received the President's Leadership Award in recognition of her efforts to help the college transition to remote learning in the early days of the pandemic. Director of Instructional Technology Jacob Angelo shared the award.

GCCCD Employees At a Glance

2,452
Total
Employees

654Faculty (full-time)

1,102Faculty (part-time)

375
Classified Staff

117
Administrators,
Managers, Others

460 Student/Hourly Workers



A mentor for former foster youth, a key worker at a child development center and a professional development expert were lauded at a Governing Board meeting in May for epitomizing excellence.

Nashona Andrade, a District Services Professional Development specialist; Sam Rigby, Grossmont College NextUp specialist; and Natalija Worrell, Cuyamaca College Child Development technician, each received the 2020-2021 Chancellor and Classified Senate Award recognizing the excellence of classified, or non-instructional, staff at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.

"This annual award recognizes the exemplary work of the best of our classified professionals whose skills and collaboration help us to better serve students and the community," Chancellor Lynn Neault said. "This year's award focused on the districtwide commitment to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion within our institution. The three award recipients strongly reflect this priority in the work that they do."

Students Reaching New Heights with College Promise Program

In the third year of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca College Promise, 3,100 students received free tuition and payment of mandatory fees in 2020-2021 – a 59% increase from the previous year. The Promise covers two years of free tuition and fees for first-time students attending college full-time. More than 1,700 Promise students were also eligible to receive an additional \$250 grant to help pay for books and expenses.

Almost two-thirds of first-time Promise students continued with a second year of studies, compared to 43% of other similar students. A survey of Promise students attending their second year at Grossmont or Cuyamaca College found that 89% said that receiving the Promise award played a major factor in their decision to continue their education.

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca College Promise was launched in fall 2018 following the passage of Assembly Bill 19, which provided for free tuition at California community colleges. The passage of Assembly Bill 2 provides for two years of free tuition to students who meet the requirements of the Promise, stay in school full-time and maintain at least a "C" average.

Cole Atencio, Grossmont College

Cole Atencio said he's known since he started high school that he wanted to be an actor. His experience at Grossmont College's Theatre Arts department gave him the on-stage experience to help him hone his skills.

In April, Cole appeared in "The Mad Ones," the Grossmont College Theatre Arts production that streamed online. Cole, a 20-year-old La Mesa resident, said he was bit by the acting bug when he saw a play while in high school. "Watching those people on the stage who were my age really got me interested in theater," Cole said.

His parents had encouraged him to attend a university, but the death of his father at

the start of his senior year of high school caused Cole to consider other options for his education.



"I started thinking, 'What do I want to do?' I still wanted to pursue an education, but I didn't want to make the commitment to a four-year school," he said. Cole decided instead to attend Grossmont College. An additional selling point was getting his tuition paid through the Grossmont-Cuyamaca College Promise, which offers two years of free tuition to first-time students attending Grossmont or Cuyamaca College full-time.

"It was something that was really nice to have," Cole said of the Promise. "I don't need to spend the extra money before I go to a four-year school." Cole said he's had a good experience

with his online classes this academic year.

"Throughout the pandemic, I have felt supported," he said. "If I miss an assignment, they reach out and say, 'What's going on?' They try to help me in whatever way they could."

Cole hopes that his experience in the play and his education at Grossmont College will lead him toward his dream career as an actor in musical theatre.

"I feel like that is my direction in life," he said.

Mikeala Johnson, Cuyamaca College

Mikaela Johnson is a competitive gymnast who's thankful for the flexibility the District's Promise program provided during her two years at Cuyamaca College.

The recent anthropology graduate started at Cuyamaca College in 2019. Thanks to the two years of free community college provided by the Grossmont-Cuyamaca College Promise, Johnson said she was able to concentrate on progressing in her education, rather than worrying how to pay for classes. Now an anthropology major at San Diego State University, she has set her sights on earning a doctorate, working as a forensic anthropologist and eventually, establishing an elite competitive gymnastics center.

"I spent seven years as a competitive gymnast at the Southern California Elite Gymnastics Academy and have been a gymnast since I was 3 years old," she said. "Apart from academics, that sport is what I am most passionate about, and it is what I hope to continue doing at SDSU and even beyond."

Born and raised in San Diego County, Johnson graduated with honors from Steele Canyon High School and originally had her heart set on attending an out-of-state university. But when a pair of Cuyamaca College counselors visited her high school during her senior year and outlined the advantages of the Promise program, she thought about how much more affordable it would be for her to attend college locally.

"Although I wasn't initially the happiest camper, I ultimately developed an appreciation for everything about it," said Johnson, who aspires to be the first in her family to earn a graduate degree. "I was truly grateful for Cuyamaca's overall welcoming atmosphere; it made the transition from high school to college smoother than I could have anticipated. The Promise program enabled me to pay for my books and courses, as well as concentrate on advancing my education rather than on financing it."

Johnson also calls participating in Cuyamaca College's Umoja program, which supports underserved students, one of the best educational decisions she's ever made. She attended an Umoja conference in Oakland, where she listened to others talk about their challenges as Black students.

"Attending the conference and seeing individuals who have battled tooth and nail to reach where they are today was inspirational," she said. "The Umoja curriculum exposed me to a way of thinking I had never considered conceivable. The Umoja program instilled confidence in me and taught me to strive high without fear."



"The Promise program enabled me to pay for my books and courses, as well as concentrate on advancing my education rather than on financing it."

3,100 students received free tuition and payment of mandatory fees through Promise

59%
increase in Promise participation from past years

1,700
Promise students
were also eligible
to receive
an additional
\$250 grant

Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges

How Grossmont College alumnus parlayed his football prowess into entrepreneurial success

It was 1999, Clint Womack's final season of varsity football at Mira Mesa High School and the senior was striving for a scholarship and recruitment to play college ball.

The Southern California native, who was born in Angheim and arew up in San Diego, suffered a broken ankle during the third game of the season. That put the kibosh on Womack's immediate plans to finish strong during his final year on the high school gridiron.

"I was hoping to earn an athletic scholarship out of high school, but the ankle injury altered those plans," said Womack, now the president and owner of Vintage Lending, a Utah-based mortgage brokerage and lender currently licensed in 11 states across the country, from California to Florida.

With no university scholarship offers, Womack, who played football, baseball, soccer and volleyball in high school, turned his sights to Grossmont College. Then offensive coordinator Michael Jordan and his father and head coach Dave Jordan led Griffin football to a state championship in 2005.

"I liked the style of offense that Mike Jordan ran and I felt that he would give me a fair shot to compete for the starting quarterback position," Womack said about the college's now head football coach. Womack went on to play football at Grossmont College in 1999 and in 2000, he won the Joe Roth Memorial

Award, given to the San Diego County community college football player who best exemplifies high academic standards and athletic excellence.

"Football was a big part of my life and it taught me important lessons about team work, discipline, and dedication," said Womack, a Foundation donor, who this past spring contributed \$5,000 during a Grossmont College football fundraiser that went toward the purchase of uniform gear.

Womack said he is especially keen to help athletes who join Grossmont College's football program from out of state with the hope of going on to earn an athletic scholarship to play at a university.

"The out-of-state students have to pay higher tuition and often also have to work to pay for their own housing while they try to go to school and play football, as well," he said. "That's a lot of strain to jugale all of that."

While at Grossmont College, Womack was named 1st Team All American, and most importantly, in 2001, he received an athletic scholarship to Northern Arizona University. The following year, he, received the Offensive National Player of the Week Award as the starting guarterback at NAU, where he played until graduating in 2003 with a degree in Exercise Science with a pre-med emphasis and a minor in chemistry. After completing his two-year mission for The Church



of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Georgia and South Carolina, he contemplated medical school, but decided to pursue business instead.

"I realized I'm an entrepreneur at heart," said Womack, who lives with his wife and three children, Sophie, 7; Kate, 8; and Zac, 10, in Salt Lake City. Womack credits Grossmont College for its formative influence on his business and life's success.

"From nutrition to consistency and leadership, the life skills I gleaned from my years at Grossmont College will always hold a special place in my heart and mind," he said.



Cuyamaca College scholarship a family affair

In addition to their 4-year-old son, Ethan, Josue (Josh) Franco and his wife, Mayra Chavez, have a joint creation that's near and dear to their hearts: the Franco Family Scholarship.

Franco, a political science professor at Cuyamaca College, and Chavez, an interim grant coordinator for the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges, launched the scholarship to help political science students at Cuyamaca College.

Starting in spring 2022, the \$150 scholarship will be awarded to one student each semester, which the couple hopes to increase to three with a funding endowment.

"As a first-generation college graduate, introducing political science to the next generation of leaders and scholars is my mission," Franco said.

Franco started in higher education by earning associate degrees in political science and economics from Cerritos College in Los Angeles, and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in public policy, and a master's degree and doctorate in political science, all from the University of California, Merced.

It was as at UC Merced that Franco met Chavez, who received her bachelor's degree there in political science and her master's degree in higher education administration from National University.

Franco, an LA native, and Chavez, who is from Delano in the San Joaquin Valley, both were staff members for U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) and lived in Washington, D.C. in 2009-2011. Returning to the San Joaquin Valley, they worked in various capacities in higher education before moving to San Diego County in 2019 to begin their respective jobs at Cuyamaca College and the Foundation office.

Foundation Donor Dick Dahlberg: **Grossmont College Exceptional**

As a nonagenarian, Dick Dahlberg concedes it's sometimes tough to remain active, but not for the reasons one might think.

"Old guys are not the first people party-givers think of as they make out their invite list," said the retired nuclear physicist, who started a family scholarship fund totaling \$25,000 to provide 25 Grossmont College students \$500 each. Those who continue to meet the required 4.0 grade point average for a minimum nine units of classes, will receive an additional \$500 each for the spring.

A graduate of the renowned Oak Ridge School of Reactor Technology founded by Hyman Rickover - the father of the nuclear Navy - Dahlberg retired after a 31-year career designing and analyzing nuclear reactors at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Schenectady, New York, and at General Atomics in San Diego. From 2005-2017, he taught an assortment of science classes at UCSD. National University and Grossmont College before retiring as an educator in spring 2017.

"Grossmont College is in the middle of educating a new and diverse population," Dahlberg said. "American exceptionalism is real and measurable and it is due in large part to our diversity. Grossmont plays an important role in developing and maintaining that exceptionalism."

Dahlberg has also lectured on the history of science at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute



at UCSD, as well as on topics like medieval history and Isaac Newton.

Born in Astoria, Oregon, math and science came easily to him as a youngster and his pursuit of physics led to an undergraduate degree from the University of Oregon, a master's degree from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He has authored technical articles for the preeminent Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, founded by Manhattan Project scientists. He has even authored plays about medieval times put on at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He has also been very active in community planning in La Jolla, where he resides.

The grandfather of five said the Dahlberg Family Scholarship is a philanthropic pursuit he engages in with his three daughters, Robin, Julie and Andrea, all of whom pursued careers of their own in law and marketing. "Education is all about creating choices for yourself," he said. "The harder you work, the more choices. I hope our financial aid can help students achieve their potential."

Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges

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Thank you to the many donors who gave during the 2020-21 academic year. The funds raised are used for scholarships and programs that benefit Grossmont and Cuyamaca College students. To learn more about how you can donate, visit foundation.gcccd.edu.

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