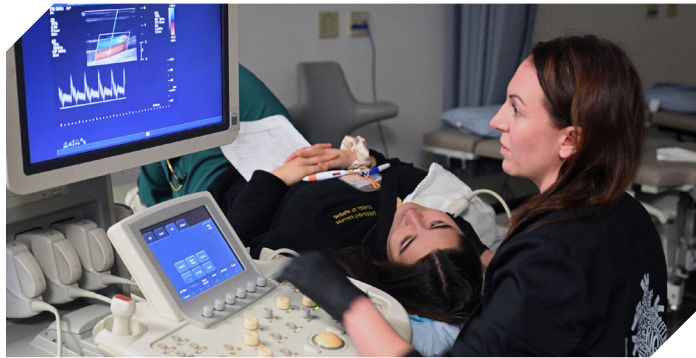


Leading & Supporting ***INNOVATION***

Annual Report 2024-2025



GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



A Message from the Chancellor

Lynn Ceresino Neault, Ed.D.



Leading and Supporting Innovation

This Annual Report highlights the many successes of the past year, focused on *Leading and Supporting Innovation*. Promoting innovative practices has been an intentional focus. Grossmont College added a new Associate Degree in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to meet workforce demand, and Cuyamaca College strengthened its Veterans Center to support the unique needs of our student veterans. With our rapidly changing environment, we believe that providing innovative programs and services is key to transforming the lives of our students and creating the conditions for them to be successful.

Our successes have been remarkable. In 2025, the District awarded over 6,340 degrees and certificates, 20% more than in 2024, and our two colleges have the highest transfer acceptance rate to SDSU in the region. With enrollment steadily on the rise, up 21% in 2024-2025, nearly 29,000 students attended Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges to take advantage of the hundreds of pathways offered for transfer or to transition directly to high-wage, in-demand careers, particularly here in East County. The colleges also added new non-credit courses in ESL, AI, and Allied Health to meet the workforce needs of the community, including offering off-campus ESL classes located in the Potrero community, an unincorporated area of our District.

This was also another award-winning year for our District, colleges, and employees. In the fall, the District was honored with a Partnership of the Decade Award from the East County Economic Development Council for our work with the East County business community. Multiple students, programs, and teams districtwide were honored with awards, including a statewide Classified Employee of the Year Award. Grossmont College was named a Champion of Higher Education for Excellence in Transfer. For the third time in a row, Cuyamaca College was recognized by

Military Times magazine as Best for Vets, both for students and as an employer. This past year, our athletics teams excelled, and brought home multiple championship titles. Our Foundation awarded over \$130,000 in student scholarships, and recognized hundreds of donors and alumni.

As the largest institution of higher education in East County, and the premier provider of workforce training in the region, we proudly hosted many important events showcasing our colleges, including career fairs, forums for elected officials, cultural events, and theater performances. We have expanded existing partnerships with local high schools, such as the addition of Helix Charter and Steele Canyon Charter High Schools to the East County Education Alliance, and we provided more services to our underserved communities through our highly innovative Community Engagement Project.

We are looking forward to more accomplishments in the years ahead through continued innovation, enhanced community partnerships, and a strong commitment to our mission, vision, and values, which focus on student equity and success.

Thank you for your continued support of Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges.



OUR STUDENTS

Students

Grossmont: 21,981

Cuyamaca: 14,542

District: 29,074



Degrees

Over 6,340 degrees & certificates awarded

High School Dual Enrollment:
over 4,500 students

Full-time
43%

Part-time
57%

Age

<20: 8,684

20-24: 9,060

25-29: 3,254

30-49: 6,154

50+: 1,922



Financial Aid Eligibility

53% of students received financial assistance

33% of students are **First Generation**

Female
56%

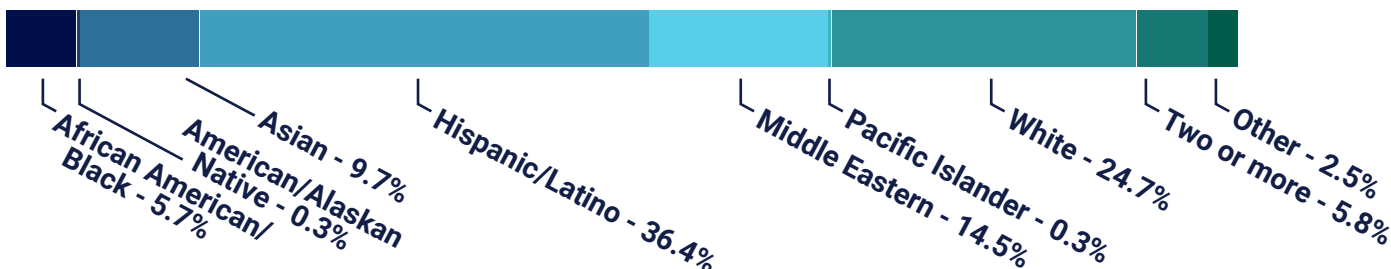
Male
42%



Vets, Military, and Affiliated

~1,000 veteran and military-affiliated students

Ethnicity



Students Transferred: ~1,500 students transfer each year

Top
Transfer
Schools:

SDSU

UC San Diego



UCLA

POINT LOMA
NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

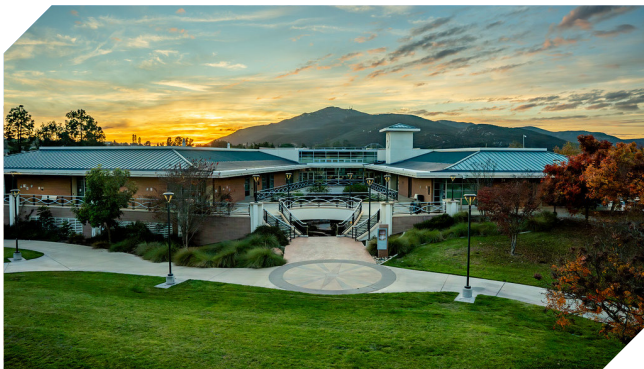
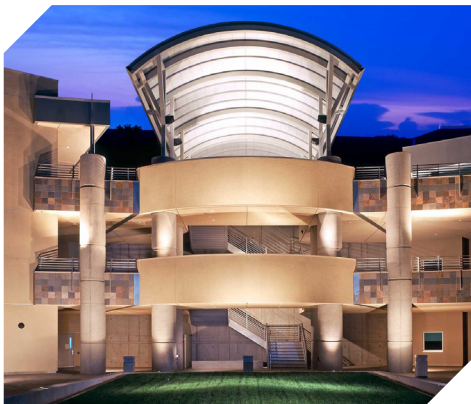


Partnership of the Decade Award

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District was honored by the East County Economic Development Council (ECEDC) with a Partnership of the Decade Award at the ECEDC 40th Anniversary Gala in October 2024. The event celebrated forty years of successful collaboration and accomplishments by the ECEDC through their most impactful partnerships. The District was honored to have played a crucial and innovative role in driving economic development in East County during the past decade.

Supporting Innovation Thanks to the Investment of our Community

In 2012, East County voters approved Proposition V, which has allowed the District to make substantial upgrades at both Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges. The funding provided renovations at both campuses, including safety upgrades and innovative improvements for career training facilities, and our science and allied health programs. While there are still needed repairs, the colleges are better equipped to prepare local students and veterans for college and career success.



CUYAMACA COLLEGE

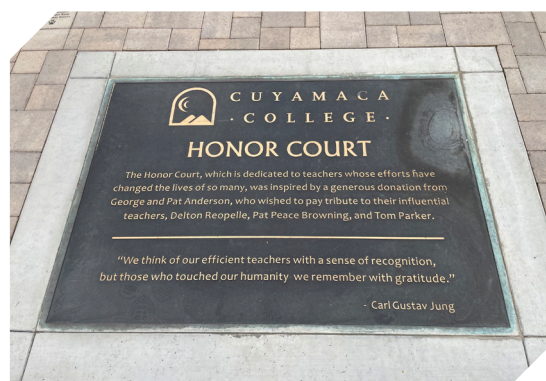
Highlights

Best for Vets

► Cuyamaca College was proud to be ranked as **Best for Vets by Military Times**, for the third year in a row, for both students and employees. The college is ranked fourth among the twelve other honorees. The on-campus Veterans Center is staffed by coordinators and counselors who ensure that all student veterans receive the help, support, and resources they need to succeed academically.



► In 2024, the **Cuyamaca Cares** pantry, which offers fresh and shelf-stable items, provided food to over 740 students, nearly 3,000 times. In November, as part of the Cuyamaca Cares initiative, the College opened its Safe Sleeping student parking lot to students experiencing homelessness. The safe lot provides 11 parking spaces for students, and offers 24-hour security, along with access to showers and restrooms.



Student Focused



► After much anticipation, the **Black Student Success Center** opened its doors in the Cuyamaca College Library in January 2025. The Center is dedicated to supporting the needs of Black and African American students, and includes space for Umoja program meetings, an Umoja counselor, workshops on scholarships, financial aid, and transfer applications, as well as study sessions, cultural events, and community-building activities.

► In October 2024, the **Cuyamaca College Honor Court** reopened with a suite of new pavers donated by community leaders, alumni, emeritus faculty, and administrators. The pavers not only create a legacy on the Cuyamaca College campus, but they also represent the meaningful donations that go directly to student scholarships, which allow Cuyamaca College students to reach their full potential.



Jessica Robinson, Ed.D.
President

Supporting East County

► In conjunction with the East County Economic Development Council (ECEDC), Cuyamaca College hosted the **9th Annual East County Manufacturing EXPO**, welcoming local businesses, as well as over 500 high school students, 200 college attendees, job seekers, and community members. Elected officials, community leaders, and education advocates were in attendance to support this mission-driven initiative.



► In January 2025, the **American Red Cross** contacted the District with an urgent request to set up and support an evacuation center in the Cuyamaca College Gymnasium in response to the Border 2 Fire. District and Cuyamaca College teams began preparations without hesitation, and within a few hours, the Red Cross transformed the campus into a safe haven, providing over 30 evacuees with supplies and shelter.

College Excellence

► In 2024, Cuyamaca College received the **Excellence in Placement Award** from The Campaign for College Opportunity. Additionally, the College was recognized with the **Equity Designation in Black Transfer-Level Math Success**, ranking among the top three community colleges in California for Black student success in transfer-level math. With an impressive 71.4% success rate, Cuyamaca College was ranked number one among these institutions.



► Cuyamaca College's **Student Services Center** was recognized with a prestigious **2024 American Architecture Award®** as a best new building, designed and constructed by American architects in the U.S. and abroad. This was a \$38 million project funded by East County voter-approved Proposition V.



► In Spring 2025, San Diego County District 4 Supervisor Monica Montgomery Steppe officially proclaimed April 25th to be **Cuyamaca College Men's Soccer Team Day**. This special recognition included a ring ceremony and honored the team's historic 3C2A State Championship win in December of 2024, the first ever for the San Diego County Region.

GROSSMONT COLLEGE

Highlights



Denise Whisenhunt, J.D.
President

Bright Futures

► The **2025 Transfer Fair** brought representatives from more than 40 universities to Grossmont College. The Transfer Fair provided an opportunity for students to engage with four-year university partners, receive assistance with their California State University and University of California applications, and attend workshops and admissions presentations.



► Fifteen Grossmont College students inside the **Las Colinas Detention Facility** in Santee celebrated the end of the semester with a certificate ceremony alongside college leadership. The honorees are incarcerated students who completed their Counseling 120 and Math 120 courses as part of the **Pathways to Success Academy**. The program is a collaboration between the women's detention facility and Grossmont College that allows courses to be offered inside the facility.

► This Fall, employers, students, and community members came together to hold the **46th Annual Career Expo and Job Fair** at Grossmont College. The event was attended by more than 100 employers, and nearly 250 recruiters. Over 800 job seekers attended, and raised over \$6,000 in sponsorships and donations.

Student Recognition



► Grossmont College Echocardiography students **Stephanie Ha and Dania Elia** have been awarded the prestigious **Alan D. Waggoner Sonographer Student Scholarship** from the American Society of Echocardiography. Each student received a \$1,000 scholarship and a \$1,000 travel grant to attend the American Society of Echocardiography's (ASE) Annual Scientific Sessions.

► Student **Dereck Alexandro Vallin-Foglio** won first place at the 2025 Intercollegiate Philosophy Tournament. His essay, "Colonialism, Coloniality, and Liberation Philosophy," was chosen from among multiple submissions by students across regional participating community colleges.



► Grossmont College's **Speech and Debate team** delivered an award-winning performance at the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament in Virginia during the spring semester. Competing against colleges from across the country, the team earned multiple national awards and demonstrated the strength of Grossmont College's academic excellence. The team brought home two gold awards, one silver award, and four bronze awards across all categories, including debate, persuasion, and speaking.

The Arts



► In the Spring of 2025, the comic opera **Pirates of Penzance**, by Gilbert and Sullivan, took the stage at the Performing and Visual Arts Center. The critically acclaimed production featured a memorable set, period appropriate costuming, as well as accomplished singing and musical direction.

► Representing the first major retrospective since his passing in 2022, the Grossmont College **Hyde Art Gallery** hosted former faculty member Harry Lum's work created during the last 20 years of his life. On display were some of his most politically charged pieces that directly confronted pressing social and political issues.



► In December 2024, Grossmont College unveiled its **new student mural inside the Griffin Center**. The Mural was created by Art 106 students under the direction of Professor Victor Ochoa, renowned Chicano artist, muralist, and founding member of Chicano Park in San Diego.

Empowering Veterans

► Grossmont College continued its efforts to support student veterans by providing essential resources to help them succeed through the **Tech for Success** initiative. The program included the distribution of 80 laptops, securing access to vital technology; and providing meal vouchers to the Griffin Grill, which offered essential fuel to help students succeed.



Student
SUCCESS STORIES



Diego Montalvan
Grossmont College

When Diego Montalvan signed up for Kaya Rainbolt’s sculpture class at Grossmont College, he had no idea that his work would end up on the Marvel Studios Instagram account. The assignment was to create a cardboard hero costume, and Montalvan chose Dock Ock as his inspiration. When he took his creation to San Diego Comic-Con, the minute he stepped off the trolley, the response from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. Out of the many attendees vying for photos was Marvel Entertainment. The photo racked up almost 1 million likes, and joined images of Iron Man and Wolverine on the studio’s official Instagram feed.

Victor Mercado
Cuyamaca College

Victor Mercado, a Cuyamaca College student majoring in web development, finished his paid internship with Chakratech in 2024, along with 350 students who also completed paid internships with local employers. He has a passion for design and logic, programming languages, and expanding his knowledge of technology. Victor stated that he is grateful for the professional communication skills he gained working with a team of developers. His internship is part of the District’s Border Region Talent Pipeline Project, intended to increase and diversify the number of local students prepared for high-wage, high-demand careers.



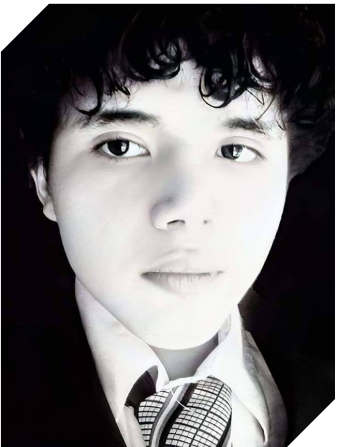
Makini Cambridge-Ragan
Grossmont College



Makini Cambridge-Ragan is more than just a student at Grossmont College, she is a mentor, advocate, and leader. As a computer science major, financial aid student worker, and member of Umoja, she is deeply engaged at Grossmont College to help herself and her fellow students thrive. It was her husband’s military career that brought her to San Diego and then Grossmont College. On campus, she found her place within Umoja, a program dedicated to providing academic, financial, and communal support to students in the Black/ African American community. A dedicated worker in the financial aid office, she ensures that students are aware of financial resources. Cambridge-Ragan plans to transfer to UC San Diego with her 3.84 GPA. She received a Griffin Award of Excellence for her hard work and dedication, accompanied by a \$1,000 scholarship.

Adolfo Samaniego
Cuyamaca College

Cuyamaca College Student Adolfo Samaniego was recognized as a 2025 Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) All-California Award Winner. Announced by The Community College League of California, the award recognizes students’ achievements in grades, leadership, and community service, and represents some of the best of the two million students enrolled in California’s 116 community colleges. Adolfo is earning an Associate Degree in Electrical Engineering at Cuyamaca College, along with an Associate Degree in Science for Transfer in Mathematics. His goal is to continue his studies at San Diego State University, and work in a math-related field where he can apply his analytical skills.



Athletics at *GROSSMONT AND CUYAMACA COLLEGES*

CUYAMACA COYOTES

In 2024, the Cuyamaca College Men's Soccer team secured their second consecutive Pacific Coast Athletics Conference (PCAC) title, and made history by winning the first-ever California Community College Athletics Association (3C2A) State Championship in the San Diego region. Additionally, Enrique "Kike" Rodriguez was named PCAC Player of the Year, and Coach Brian Hiatt-Aleu earned PCAC Coach of the Year.



In Fall 2024, after a five-year hiatus, the San Diego Chapter of "Roll to Success" returned to Cuyamaca College. The local wheelchair basketball club demonstrated their skills in a competition against members of Cuyamaca College's men's and women's basketball teams.

The Men's Cross-Country team earned the 3C2A scholar team award for developing leadership roles within the campus community, and maintaining a team GPA of 3.5.

Cuyamaca College welcomed three former U.S.A. Olympic athletes to the Track and Field coaching staff. Chris Benard, a two-time triple jump Olympian, became Head Coach. Former NCAA discus champion Lauluga Tasanga, and Rolland "Jay" Slade, a former Paralympic guide runner for Team USA, also joined the coaching team. In his first season, Coach Benard was awarded the PCAC Women's Track and Field Coach of the Year for 2025.

The Men's and Women's Track and Field teams began the 2025 season by breaking two school records. Sophomore Steven Valadez set a new Men's 3000m record, and Brinley Campbell won the 3C2A State Championship with her record-breaking 100m hurdle.



GROSSMONT GRIFFINS

The Grossmont College Women's Basketball team ended the 2024-2025 season with 22 wins and 4 losses, securing second place in the Pacific Coast Athletic Conference (PCAC). The Lady Griffins are now ranked 19th in the PCAC for 2025, an improvement from their 23rd place ranking in the previous season.

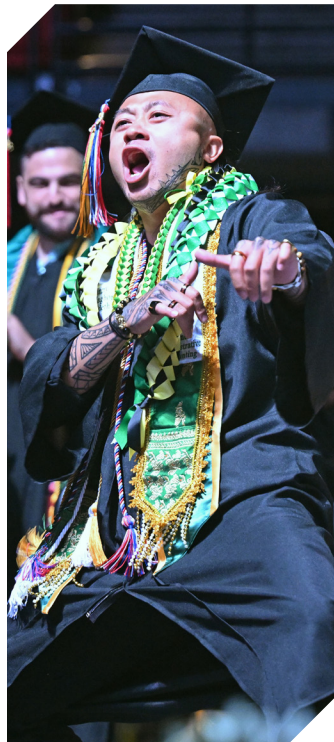


The Men's Water Polo team captured the PCAC championship for the third time in the last four seasons. With this victory, the Griffins clinched their 29th conference championship in program history and qualified for the Southern California Regional Playoffs, but unfortunately did not advance.

The Men's and Women's Swim and Dive team finished the 2024-2025 season on top of the PCAC. Maya Garcia-Hale and Camille Seiley were named PCAC Women's Swimmers of the Year, and beat a sixteen-year-old state meet record in the 50-yard freestyle. Dustin Walter earned the Men's PCAC Swimmer of the Year award, and Coach Carli Willis was awarded PCAC Coach of the Year for 2025.

The Baseball team advanced to the first round of the California Community College Athletic Association (3C2A) Regional Playoffs, and the PCAC recognized five Grossmont College baseball standouts who were named to the All-PCAC First Team.





2025 Commencement *CELEBRATIONS*

In early June, Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges awarded more than **6,340 degrees and certificates** to nearly **2,400 graduates**, with over 900 graduates participating in commencement ceremonies. The number of degrees and certificates awarded this year is nearly **20% more** than 2024.



Remy Berman
Grossmont College Student Speaker

"Strength isn't always loud. Sometimes it looks like waking up and choosing to keep going, no matter the odds. You are not what broke you, you are what survived it."

Grossmont College Student Speaker Remy Berman, a 44-year-old single mother, overcame incredible adversity to earn her degree. When she was younger, Remy was labeled a problem child and left school without a diploma. While pregnant, she earned her GED and went on to earn an Associate Degree in Veterinary Technology, receiving the Director's Award for Perseverance. At Grossmont College, Remy graduated with a 3.7 GPA and plans to pursue a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice at San Diego State University, aiming for law school. Her inspirational commencement speech earned a standing ovation, proving the power of determination.

Cuyamaca College Student Speaker John Hallock was inspired by courtroom dramas like Suits and decided to pursue a career in law. When his financial aid situation at a four-year university became too challenging, he restarted his education at Cuyamaca College. John's Cuyamaca College professors challenged him to open his mind to new possibilities, and as a psychology major, he believes that understanding human behavior is essential for empathetic law practice. John acknowledged his professors, the strong bonds students build during their programs, and that the resources available to all students at Cuyamaca College made it much more than just a place to pursue academic aspirations.

"Our collective responsibility is to ensure that every space we enter is an opportunity for personal and community improvement, creating a legacy of impact, and inspiration along our way."



John C. Hallock
Cuyamaca College Student Speaker

Recognizing *EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE*

The District is extremely proud to have a history of employees and representatives whose hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm are frequently recognized with honors and awards, and 2024-2025 was no exception. We are proud of our distinguished employees, and grateful to our local, regional, and higher education partners, and community organizations for the recognition.

Community Leadership Awards

In February, District leaders and partners were honored by the **San Diego Regional East County Chamber of Commerce** at the 113th Annual **East County Honors Awards Gala**. Honorees were awarded due to excellent community involvement, consistently working with, and contributing to the East County Chamber, and demonstrating a strong sense of ethics and personal integrity. The event recognized Sally Cox and Javier Ayala, two outstanding Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District leaders.



Javier Ayala
Business and Education
Person of the Year
Dean, Grossmont College



Sally Cox
Leadership,
East County
CEO, Foundation
for Grossmont &
Cuyamaca Colleges

2024-2025 League Excellence Awards

Innovation of the Year Awards are given annually by the League for Innovation in the Community College, to recognize significant achievements and the spirit of innovation and experimentation upon which the League was founded. In 2024-2025, the following Grossmont and Cuyamaca college faculty were honored:



Christina Burnett
Adjunct Faculty, Biology
Cuyamaca College



Hau Nguyen
Faculty, Computer Science
and Information Systems
Grossmont College



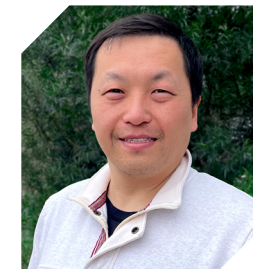
Ahn Nuzen
Faculty, Computer Science
and Information Systems
Grossmont College



Miriam Simpson
Faculty, Physics
Cuyamaca College

2025 Chancellor and Classified Senate Awards

Each year, the Chancellor and Classified Senate Awards recognize outstanding contributions made by exceptional classified professionals at the District and each college. Recognized in 2025 were:



Peng Cheng
Enterprise
Systems
District
Services



Dawn Heuft
Learning &
Technology
Resources
Grossmont
College



Paul Palacios
Ornamental
Horticulture
Cuyamaca
College



Cuyamaca College Senior Admissions and Records Specialist Vanessa Saenz was honored by the Office of the California Community Colleges Chancellor with the **Classified Employee of the Year** award for 2025. During a ceremony in Sacramento, Vanessa was recognized for her exemplary service, commitment to supporting students, as well as her leadership on campus and in the community. Vanessa actively contributes to campus planning efforts, professional development, and committee work, all while maintaining standards of service, compliance, and communication.

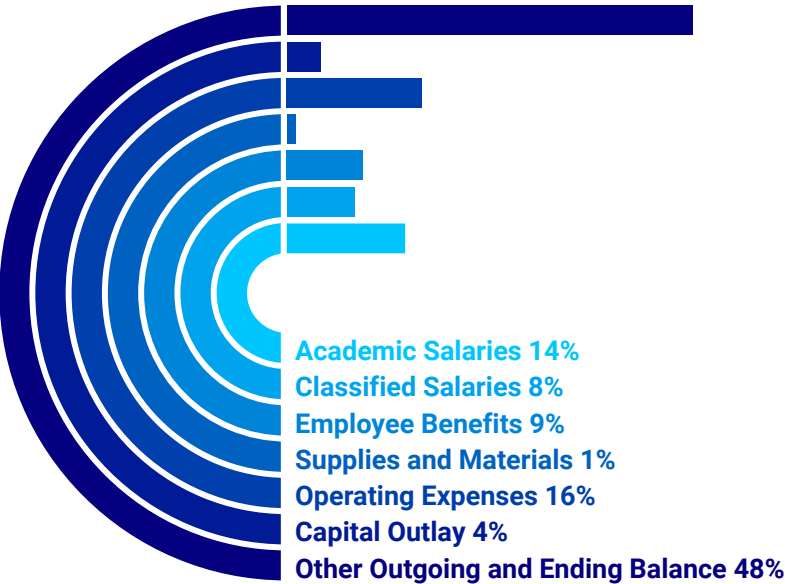
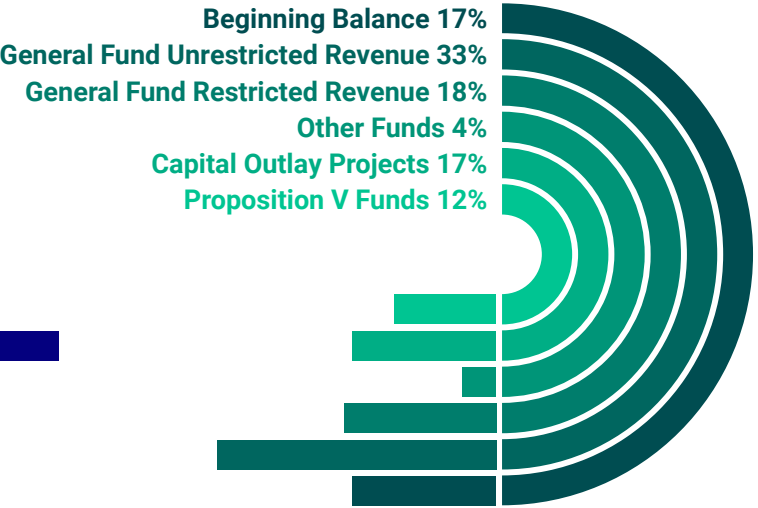
The **San Diego Regional East County Chamber of Commerce** celebrated its 23rd Annual **Women in Leadership** event, honoring women who excel professionally. In 2024, Chancellor Lynn Neault and Grossmont College President Denise Whisenhunt were honored for their dedication and collaboration with other women, fostering a community of empowered female leaders.



DISTRICT BUDGET

The District budget consists of several funds according to the guidance of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Budget and Accounting Manual. The main funds are the General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Capital Outlay Projects Fund, and General Obligation Bond Fund.

**2024-2025
Funds Available:
\$493,680,225**



**2024-2025
Expenditures &
Ending Balances:
\$493,680,225**

The General Fund is the primary operating fund used to cover the full scope of operations such as instruction, administration, student services, maintenance and operations, etc. All financial resources, except those required to be accounted for in another fund, are in the General Fund.

Special Revenue Funds are specific revenue sources whose expenditures are legally restricted. Special Revenue Funds encompass support services that are not directly related to the educational program of the college. Special Revenue Funds consist of the Bookstore Fund and the Child Development Fund.

The Capital Outlay Projects Fund is used for the expenditure of monies which finance the construction of capital outlay items, state-funded capital projects, scheduled maintenance, and other special repair projects.

The General Obligation Bond Fund is from the sale of bonds under Proposition 39, and the related expenditures for construction of projects voted on, and approved by the local property owners. Monies may only be expended for the purposes authorized by the Proposition 39 Bond voter-approved ballot measure.

The 2024-2025 GOVERNING BOARD



The Governing Board represents the public interest in supporting Districtwide goals and strategic priorities, and establishes policies that define the institutional direction and standards for the District's operations.

Debbie Justeson
Board President

Julie Schorr
Board Vice President

Elena Adams
Board Clerk

Brad Monroe
Board Member

Desiree "Desi" Klaar
Board Member

Cesar Nuñez
Student Trustee
Grossmont College

Manual Juarez Lopez
Student Trustee
Cuyamaca College



The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Board actively supports the colleges and District at various campus and community events, including participating in MLK celebrations and commencement. The Board members also engage in advocacy, locally and statewide, with the Community College League of California (CCLC), the East County Chamber, and the East County Economic Development Council. This past year, Board President Debbie Justeson was awarded the San Diego Business Journal Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Award, and honored by California Senate District 39 with the Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Leader of Influence Award for her contributions to higher education and the East County community.

COMMUNITY

Engagement

Community Engagement Project Expands

The District's Community Engagement Project has partnered with United Domestic Workers (UDW), a union representing over 200,000 in-home support services and childcare providers. The collaboration is a key component of the State Chancellor's Office, and the District's partnership offers access to career and academic programs at both Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges that enhance skills, open new career paths, and boost income. In the first year, the District participated in over 20 community outreach events, and connected with thousands of UDW members in the region.



East County Principal's Breakfast

In February 2025, Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges hosted a joint Principal's Breakfast at Grossmont College. The event was attended by principals and superintendents from various East County community schools and districts, and provided a format to strengthen partnerships, highlight academic pathways, and collaborate on future opportunities.

Local Legislators Visit Campuses

The District continues to advocate on behalf of our students, and maintain strong relationships with local legislators. In 2024-2025, the District was honored to host several of our elected leaders at various events and through campus tours.



The East County Education Alliance Grows

The East County Education Alliance (ECEA), which includes the District, Grossmont Union High School District, and Mountain Empire High School District, focuses on outreach, early college credit, and the development of career pathways, allowing students to accelerate their college careers. In 2025, the ECEA grew to include Helix Charter and Steele Canyon Charter. In 2024, the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District enrolled over 4,500 students in the Dual Enrollment program in collaboration with the ECEA.

Commending

ALUMNI SUCCESS

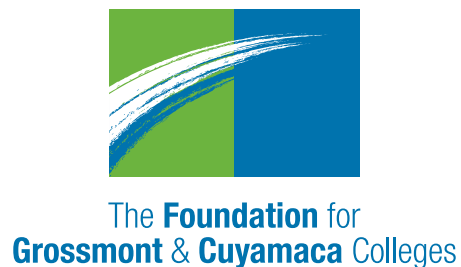


Jessica Bahena graduated from **Cuyamaca College** in Spring 2024 with multiple associate degrees, and inspired her peers as the 2024 Commencement Ceremony student speaker. Now at San Diego State University, she is pursuing a Bachelor Degree in American Indian Studies and continues to support the Cuyamaca College community as a Student Ambassador. Jessica plans to earn a Master Degree in Library and Information Science and work at the Cuyamaca College Library. She credits Cuyamaca College for her success, and she values education that honors Native and Indigenous histories. Outside of academics, she enjoys motherhood and community building.

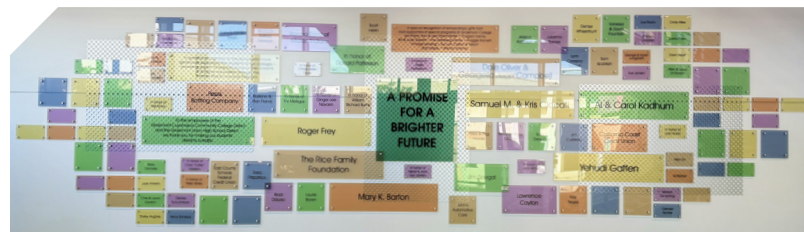
David Haile discovered his passion for dance at **Grossmont College** in 2017, taking a hip-hop choreography class taught by Melissa Adao. Despite having no prior dance experience, Haile quickly excelled and found a supportive community in dance. He joined advanced classes and performed in college events. Haile expanded his training at local studios and in Los Angeles, eventually joining several prestigious dance groups. His perseverance led to signing with a dance agency in 2022, and performing at the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival, the Black Entertainment Television (BET) Awards, and the 2025 Super Bowl halftime show. Haile credits Grossmont College for providing a safe space to explore dance and build lasting friendships.



Leading & Supporting *STUDENT SUCCESS*

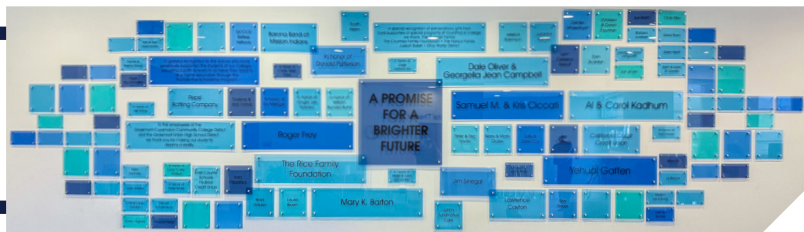


New Donor Walls



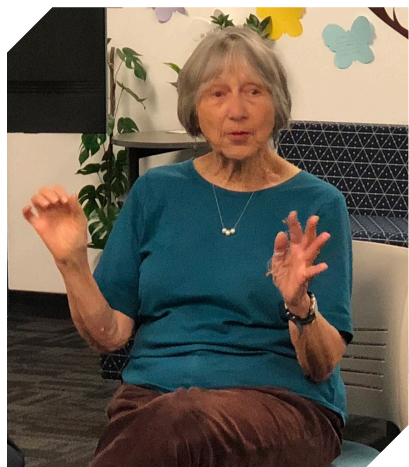
Grossmont College Performing and Visual Arts Center

Cuyamaca College Performing Arts Center



In 2025, new “Donor Walls” were installed at both Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges in special recognition of donors who have made significant contributions to the Promise Plus Scholarship endowment. The Promise Plus Scholarship program includes scholarships to help students cover the cost of books and supplies, basic needs, or other items they need to be successful in their educational journey.

- ▶ Donors have **doubled** their support of scholarships over the past five years.
- ▶ In 2024-2025, over **650 students** at Grossmont and Cuyamaca colleges received a scholarship.
- ▶ Through the Promise Plus Scholarship, the Foundation distributed nearly **\$130,000** in 2024-2025.



Glenda Richter retired from Grossmont College in 1997 after 30 years of teaching English. Beyond the classroom, she was an innovator and pioneer; instrumental in the creation of the Creative Writing program at Grossmont College in the 1970s, as well as a poetry consortium between SDSU, UCSD, and Grossmont College. Glenda and her colleagues brought renowned poets to the San Diego region to share their works with students and the community.

For Glenda, giving back is core to her being. A first-generation college student with a working-class background, she is grateful for what she has, and finds great satisfaction in providing opportunities to students. She facilitates on-campus scholarship workshops, donates her time on the scholarship review committee, and provides financial support for scholarships and the Creative Writing program.

The mission of the Foundation for Grossmont & Cuyamaca Colleges is to raise awareness and financial resources for our two colleges and the students we serve. Our vision is to make dreams possible. Scholarships play a critical role in helping the many low-income students at GCCCD to finance their education. Scholarships also provide a special boost to students who now know that someone cares enough to invest in their future.



Lyndie Ersan

“Music touches your soul. There are movements that can move you to tears because of its emotional impact.”

For Lyndie Ersan, classical music can reach a person’s innermost emotions. It is an art form to be interpreted by the heart, and is an art form for everyone. Ersan, a local businesswoman who lives in Jamul, is the benefactor of the annual East County Harmonics Organization (ECHO) Chamber Music Series at Cuyamaca College, an extraordinary program that brings classical musicians to East County from all over the world. Ticket sales support student scholarships at Cuyamaca College, raising an average of \$20,000 every year. ECHO has a dedicated group of subscribers who enjoy the celebrated classical musicians at prices far lower than many other venues. The 2024-2025 series included 11 performances.

Lyndie and her late husband, Sam Ersan, founded the ECHO Chamber Music Series at Cuyamaca College in 2017. The Ersans have been longtime supporters of classical music artists and organizations, but bringing an annual series to East County has been a real labor of love. Lyndie Ersan said the couple’s goal was to bring high-quality, live classical music to the community where they live, not far from the Cuyamaca College campus.

Lyndie says her husband loved to speak with musicians about the intellectual rigor of classical music, the technicalities, and the precision of playing an instrument well. As for herself, she says her attraction lies in the strong emotional connection to the music she loves.

“Thank you very much for this opportunity; this means the world to me and gives me fuel to keep forward in following my dreams and to be closer to my goal to become a great aerospace engineer.”

- Esteban Vilatuna Ruiz

Cuyamaca College’s Samuel M. Ciccati
Promise Plus Scholarship Recipient



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