

THE BOTTOM LINE

NEWS & VIEWS FROM COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS · SPRING 2024

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT



Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook

“How does COC manage to do all of that?” That’s a question I often get from local CEOs and community leaders when I have a chance to share with them some of our recent highlights at College of the Canyons.

Credit goes to the talented faculty, dedicated classified staff, and visionary administrators who imagine, design, and develop the new programs and initiatives the college launches each year. But the inspiration behind what we do comes from the many partners with whom we are proud to work.

College of the Canyons actively partners with more than 100 local companies, government agencies, and community organizations. And while they bring us new ideas and opportunities, our partners also have high

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ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTER Opens in Interim Location

College of the Canyons held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) production lab that will prepare students for high-skill jobs in advanced manufacturing, welding, and other fields.

“When it comes to innovation, numbers matter, but relationships matter more,” Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. “While COC stands out as a leader and driver of innovation and results, we didn’t do it alone. Our accomplishments are the direct result of the collaboration that grows out of the relationships we have with you, and that is particularly true for this facility.”

The 13,500-square-foot interim facility houses simulation and full production type machining centers to prepare more than 300 students per year for stackable industry-recognized credentials to demonstrate the necessary skills for workforce readiness as they work toward their degrees.

“This is a very important first step,” said Congressman Mike Garcia (R-Santa Clarita). “We have a national security issue that is being critically addressed here with the ATC.”

Garcia spoke about the aerospace and defense industry’s

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Congressman Mike Garcia presents COC Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook with a certificate to commemorate the opening of the interim Advanced Technology Center.

AUDIT OF BOND Spending Affirmed

The Santa Clarita Community College District’s Independent Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee voted to accept the results of an independent audit confirming the district properly accounted for all bond expenditures in the 2022-23 fiscal year

Eide Bailly, LLP conducted financial and performance audits, and issued the District an unmodified opinion – the best rating possible – noting no adjustments, audit findings, questioned costs or instances of bond noncompliance.

“This is an excellent result for College of the Canyons,” said Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook. “Our consistent track record of receiving unmodified audit opinions on our

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College Earns CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

College of the Canyons is the only California community college to receive the 2024 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, an elective designation that indicates institutional commitment to community engagement awarded by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Granted to 40 U.S. colleges and universities as part of the 2024 cycle, the prestigious classification signifies alignment among campus mission, culture, leadership, and resources that support dynamic and noteworthy practices of community engagement.

“We recognize these institutions for their exceptional commitment to community engage-

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Chancellor

FROM PAGE 1

expectations for what we can accomplish. Their belief in us and what we can achieve motivates us to constantly improve and innovate in our efforts to support students and serve the community.

It is our track record of demonstrating the power of partnerships that prompted California Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Sonya Christian to hold a daylong symposium at College of the Canyons last fall, where she shared her Vision 2030 plan and how it can be realized by colleges around the state committing to connecting with others and looking for ways to accomplish more together than they could on their own. We were pleased to host the event and highlight a number of our partnerships, many of which are featured in this issue of *The Bottom Line*.

Chief among them is the debut of our Advanced Technology Center (ATC), a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) production lab that will prepare students for high-skill jobs in advanced manufacturing, and welding. The interim location is up and running in a temporary location, and we are moving forward with plans to build a new, permanent 30,000-square-foot space on Valley Center Drive.

A \$500,000 grant from the California Workforce Development Board to develop High Road Training Partnerships (H RTP) with regional industry partners will support the ATC. The H RTP initiative was created to promote economic competitiveness and address income inequality and climate change through regional skills. In partnership with the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation, we

will have the ability to benefit dual-enrolled high school students, postsecondary technical students, underserved adult minority populations, unemployed military veterans and dislocated workers.

Our success in delivering outstanding training results was recently recognized by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board, which named our Workforce and Economic Advancement division as one of the top-performing training providers in the region for its 100 percent job placement of Uniquely Aabled Academy (UAA) graduates.

Launched in spring 2018, the UAA program provides advanced training and support for highly functional autistic individuals to work as Computer Numeric Controlled (CNC) machinists. To date, the program has trained 40 students, all of whom found employment after earning a UAA certificate.

Our commitment to supporting students is well known and particularly evident in the Canyons Promise program. Launched during the fall 2017 semester, the program helps participating students to achieve their educational goals by waiving tuition and fees for up to two years of study. The program has helped 5,300 students save more than \$4.4 million in tuition and fees to date. Students in the program consistently outperform their COC counterparts by completing more units and earning a higher grade point average in their first semester of study.

In addition to Canyons Promise, another way we help make higher education more affordable is our continued leadership in the development of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and Open Educational Resources (OER).

OER/ZTC are freely available learning materials that can be copied, edited and shared, offering students a more affordable option to traditional textbooks.

Recognized statewide and nationally not only for developing OER/ZTC materials for our own classes, but helping faculty at other colleges to do the same, we recently received grants totaling \$600,000 from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office that will allow us to create ZTC and OER pathways for certificate programs in land surveying, water systems technology, and sustainable design and development. This means students will be able to complete these programs without paying for textbooks, which alleviates the financial burden so many students experience while completing their studies.

Another new grant will enable us to expand services to veterans. We secured a \$1.4 million award from the U.S. Department of Education in support of a Veterans Upward Bound program designed to help 125 student veterans annually pursue postsecondary education. The five-year grant will enable us to help veterans focus on college readiness and admission, and completing their intended degrees.

It's true. We do have a lot going on at College of the Canyons. But it's because of supportive partners like you that we're able to move forward with implementing so many innovative programs and services to the benefit of our students and community. Thank YOU for your good ideas, enthusiasm, and belief that if we can dream it, we can do it by working together!

Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook serves as chancellor of College of the Canyons.

The Bottom Line is published by the College of the Canyons Public Information Office to inform the community of news and events of interest in the Santa Clarita Community College District.

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CANYONS PROMISE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The Canyons Promise program at College of the Canyons is now accepting sign-up forms for the 2024-25 academic year.

Launched during the fall 2017 semester, the program provides increased opportunities for first-time college students who plan to attend full-time. The program helps students to achieve their educational goals by **waiving tuition and fees for up to two years of study.**

The last day of the 2024-25 sign-up period is May 1.

“We highly encourage students to sign-up as early as possible because the program’s cohort size will be limited to 1,600 students,” said Dr. Jasmine Ruys, assistant superintendent and vice president of student services at the college. “We are very excited to welcome a new group of Canyons Promise students and help them reach their academic goals.”

To be eligible, a student must be a California resident (or AB 540-eligible student) and a first-time college student.

Interested students must submit a fall 2024 application as a first-time college student. Upon completion, applicants will receive a link to the Canyons Promise sign-up form via email.

The Promise of Achievement



Students selected for Canyons Promise consistently outperform students not enrolled in the program.

	Promise Students	Other Students
Average number of units completed in first Fall term	12	10
First term grade point average	2.9	2.3
Stay enrolled from fall to spring	91%	83%
Stay enrolled from fall to fall	84%	71%
Earn a degree or certificate in 3 years or less	35%	21%

Data from 2022-23

After signing up for Canyons Promise, students must complete all items found on the new student checklist, including the completion of a 2024-25 FAFSA or California Dream Act application, by May 1, 2024. Late submissions will not be considered. Students can be expected to be notified of their admission to the program after the May 1 deadline.

Students accepted into the program must attend a Canyons Promise session for new students over the summer and will have requirements to meet for the fall semester.

In addition to covering the cost of tuition, the program provides students with high-

touch student support and ongoing academic and career counseling to ensure they remain on their academic path. It also leverages the many resources available to students across the college to promote student success.

To date, the program has helped 5,300 students save more than \$4.4 million in tuition and fees. Students in the program have consistently outperformed their COC counterparts by completing a higher number of units and earning a higher grade point average in their first semester, and have persisted at a higher rate from year to year.

For more information about Canyons Promise and to sign up, visit canyons.edu/promise.

CORN TO RECEIVE 2024 SILVER SPUR AWARD

The College of the Canyons Foundation has named Steve Corn as the recipient of the prestigious 2024 Silver Spur Community Service Award in recognition of his longtime support of the college and community service in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The 32nd annual Silver Spur Celebration will take place at Westlake Village Inn on April 13.

“I am so excited and enthusiastic about congratulating Steve Corn for being selected as this year’s Silver Spur recipient,” said College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Diane G. Van Hook. “His undeniable commitment to the college and the success of our students and his dedication to creating opportunities for others are worthy of this prestigious recognition. His passion, care for others, heartfelt belief in the value of education and his selfless service sets a standard to strive for.”



The College of the Canyons Foundation has named Steve Corn the recipient of the 2024 Silver Spur Community Service Award.

Corn joined Newhall Escrow Co. in 1990 after a successful career with Siemens as western regional telecommunications manager. Since becoming CEO of Newhall Escrow in 2004, he has grown the family-owned business into one of the premier escrow companies servicing Northern Los Angeles County.

An active community member, Corn served two terms as president of the COC Foundation Board of Directors and as chair of the College Promise campaign. Corn was also a member of the capital fundraising campaign to build the college’s Institute for Culinary Education (iCUE).

“Being honored with the Silver Spur Award by the College of the Canyons Foundation is a highlight of my professional career,” said Corn. “Being in the company of the past honorees is truly humbling. Working to provide access to higher education for

Endowment Created to HONOR MICHELE JENKINS



The College of the Canyons Foundation has created an endowment fund in honor of Michele Jenkins, who passed away on Feb. 6, 2023, after nearly 40 years of service as a COC Board of Trustees member.

“Michele’s unwavering dedication and passion for everything College of the Canyons was inspiring and steadying,” said Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook. “Her absence from our lives continues to be deeply felt throughout the campus community. I find comfort in knowing that her hard work, spirit, care for others and love of education will live on at COC through her namesake endowment fund.”

The endowment will fund Bridging the Canyons, which will help alleviate financial stress that may prevent students from pursuing their education. Funds will be granted under the direction of the college’s director for the Basic Needs Center (BaNC) in consultation with the assistant superintendent/vice president for student services.

“College of the Canyons meant so much to my wife,” said Dr. Gregory Jenkins. “I would like to thank the COC Foundation for honor-

ing her memory in such a profound and impactful way.”

In addition, the Michele R. Jenkins Scholarship will provide an annual scholarship for current students who are enrolled full-time at COC, demonstrate financial need, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and demonstrate leadership and community service participation.

“My mom credited my parents’ success to COC,” said Lorian Jenkins. “Without COC she was adamant that my dad and her would not have been able to be young parents and college students, ultimately leading to successful careers and a wonderful life. She was incredibly proud to be a COC alumna, and humbly honored to be the longest elected COC board member. She would be so happy to know that she will continue making a difference in the lives of COC students so that they can reach their goals.”

Funds earmarked for faculty development will support the Scholarly Presentation and/or other faculty development opportunities.

To contribute to the endowment, please visit canyons.edu/foundation.

COC Foundation Launches BENCH DEDICATION PROGRAM

The College of the Canyons Foundation has launched a program to allow individuals the unique opportunity to dedicate a bench in honor of a loved one.

Donors may sponsor one or more benches located on the Valencia or Canyon Country campuses, which play host to numerous college and community events and activities.

“Dedicating a bench provides welcome seating for students, staff and visitors to read, study, relax and socialize,” said COC Foundation Chief Development Officer Jerry De Felice. “A commemorative bench can memorialize a loved one, congratulate a graduate, or show appreciation for an exceptional professor and makes a thoughtful gift for occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, or a graduation.”

Bench naming opportunities – which are good for five years or the bench’s lifetime – are tax-deductible.

Benches can be purchased with one payment or over a 12-month period. COC employees can purchase a bench through a payroll deduction option.

Some examples of bench plaque inscriptions include:

- **IN LOVING MEMORY OF JANE SMITH 1923 - 2023**
- **IN RECOGNITION OF PROFESSOR JONES FOR HER DEDICATION TO STUDENTS**
- **IN HONOR OF JANE SMITH FOR HER SERVICE TO COC**
- **THE JOHN SMITH MEMORIAL BENCH, HAVE A SEAT, RELAX, ENJOY LIFE**

The COC Foundation reserves the right to approve all inscriptions.

To learn more about placing a commemorative bench at the Valencia or Canyon Country campus and details regarding the plaque inscription, contact the COC Foundation at cocfoundation@canyons.edu or by phone at (661) 362-3434.



UAA RECEIVES AWARD for 100 Percent Job Placement



The College of the Canyons Workforce and Economic Advancement division was distinguished as one of the top-performing training providers by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board for its 100 percent job placement of Uniquely Abled Academy (UAA) graduates.

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Launched in spring 2018, the UAA program provides advanced training and support for highly functional autistic individuals to work as Computer Numeric Controlled (CNC) machinists.

To date, the program has trained 40 students, all of whom found employment after earning a UAA certificate.

The UAA, which currently provides training at the college's Valencia and Canyon Country campuses, as well as B&B Manufacturing, is relocating to the college's interim Advanced Technology Center.

The ATC, located at 26306 Diamond Place, is a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing and CNC production lab that prepares students for high-skill jobs in advanced manufacturing, welding, and other fields.

The COC Foundation will establish a fund and endowment to meet the ATC's current and future needs.

The UAA CNC machining course at COC is a 12-week program that provides

420 hours of training and instruction to participating individuals, which includes soft skills, open laboratory, job readiness, and 21st century skills training. After completing the not-for-credit course, graduates are qualified for entry-level positions as CNC operators, machinist apprentices, and machine trainees.

In collaboration with the UAA, local businesses such as Classic Wire Cut, Lusk Quality, TA Aerospace, Woodward, and DG Engineering Corp. provide employment to UAA graduates after earning certification.

To learn more about the UAA at COC, visit canyonsworkforce.org/uaa.

ETI RECEIVES WORKFORCE TRAINING AWARD

The College of the Canyons Employee Training Institute (ETI) received \$749,785 from the California Employment Training Panel (ETP) to provide worker training to client companies in the Santa Clarita Valley who wish to retain an up-skilled workforce through customized training programs.

The two-year reimbursement contract will allow the college to offset the training costs charged to employers who meet the eligibility requirements set by ETP.

This is the 17th contract of its kind awarded

to College of the Canyons and brings the total amount awarded to more than \$9 million that benefits Santa Clarita Valley employers.

Created in 1982 by the California legislature, the ETP program helps to ensure that California businesses have the skilled workers they need to remain competitive.

Unique to California, ETP is a program that is geared toward job creation and job retention through training in an effort to keep California companies competitive and operating within the state.

ETP fulfills its mission by reimbursing the cost of employer-driven training needed by employees to excel in the workforce.

The program prioritizes industries most vital to California's economic growth and recovery, including manufacturing, construction, green/clean technology, biotechnology, information technology services, and transportation logistics.

For more information about ETP funding and the Employee Training Institute at College of the Canyons, visit canyonsworkforce.org/eti.

GRANT WILL SUPPORT MESA ENROLLMENT INCREASE

College of the Canyons received a \$125,000 subaward grant as part of a \$3 million Title V grant awarded to CSUN from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of Hispanic and underrepresented students in art, health sciences, engineering, computer science, and other science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.

In collaboration with California State University, Northridge, and L.A. Pierce College, COC will support “Strengthening Equitable Culturally Responsive Environments (SECURE) for Student

Success (SfS2)” through its Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) program.

“We are so excited to have been awarded this grant providing culturally responsive training, facilitators for academic excellence workshops, and tutors in support of our students,” said Amy Foote, MESA director at the college. “This grant will allow us to better serve students who wish to pursue careers in STEM fields.”

The grant award will be used to increase enrollment, improve retention and graduation rates, as well as eliminate equity gaps.

COC’s MESA program will develop culturally enhancing academic experiences to support mental health, emotional wellbeing, and academic outcomes.

In addition, MESA will work to expand and enhance curriculum, research fellowships, and culturally relevant, work-based learning experiences in in-demand industry sectors, as well as provide proactive advisement and mentoring.

For more information about the college’s MESA program, please visit canyons.edu/mesa.



COC SELECTED TO LEAD REGIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

College of the Canyons received a \$4 million grant to join a collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity as one of eight Regional Centers of Excellence in California.

Awarded through the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, the five-year grant will position the college to play a pivotal role in helping communities understand and contextualize labor market data so their current and future workforce and workforce training needs can be actively addressed.

“Having our college designated as a Regional Center of Excellence by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office recognizes our ongoing leadership in data analysis and statewide workforce development,” said College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook. “We look forward to helping shape the future of our local economies and offering the hands-on training students need to succeed in growing labor industries.”

Having our college designated as a Regional Center of Excellence by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office recognizes our ongoing leadership in data analysis and statewide workforce development.

Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook

Serving as a Regional Centers of Excellence in California for the Workforce and Economic Development Division’s South Central Coast region, COC will work to improve the local

economy and educational offerings that will lead to greater high-skill, high-wage, and equitable employment.

In its leadership role, the college will support inclusive, equity-centered regional economic growth and help communities accomplish their goals related to student retention, completion, and transition to the workforce.

To address employer and employee needs, COC will rely extensively on Labor Market Information and data analytics.

The collaborative for Regional Effectiveness, Action, Transformation, and Equity was created by the Chancellor’s Office to focus on post-pandemic workforce recovery with a broad-based approach by targeting regional investments to serve greater numbers of diverse populations in the state through workforce training aimed at enhancing equity, access, inclusion, and deeper participation by individuals and employers.

College hosts visit from state Chancellor Sonya Christian

California Community Colleges Chancellor Dr. Sonya Christian visited COC to discuss the details of Vision 2030. Vision 2030 is a statewide framework for bold and thoughtful action with the goal of advancing student success, access, support, and socio-economic mobility with equity. The goal of the visit was to highlight how COC leverages the power of partnerships to fuel regional economies and support social mobility in its service area. The event also included presentations on the college's partnership-driven programs and a panel discussion focused on how local agencies can partner together to advance workforce training.



COC Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook



Panelists (from left) Mr. John Milburn, COC's Interim Vice President of Workforce and Economic Development; Dr. Omar Torres, Vice President of Instruction; Dr. Jey Wagner President & CEO, SCV Economic Development Corporation; Mr. Mike Kuhlman, Superintendent, Wm. S. Hart Union High School District; and Mr. Jason Crawford, Director of Economic Development, City of Santa Clarita



Dr. Catherine Kawaguchi, Superintendent, Sulphur Springs Union School District



Mr. Justin Wallace, Director of Business Partnerships & Workforce Engagement, College of the Canyons



More than 100 community partners and college employees attended



Stewart Knox, Secretary, California Labor & Workforce Development Agency and John Milburn



Dr. Jim Temple, Vice President of Technology, College of the Canyons



Chancellor Christian talks with guests



Ms. Dianne Avery, Dean of Academic Innovation and Continuing Education, College of the Canyons

\$1.4 MILLION GRANT WILL EXPAND VETERANS SERVICES

College of the Canyons has received a \$1.437 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education in support of a Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program designed to help 125 student veterans annually pursue postsecondary education by addressing gaps in support services and infrastructure.

“We are very excited to expand our support services through this grant to ensure student veterans have the resources they need to thrive academically,” said College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook.

The five-year grant partnership will provide intensive services to eligible student veterans from the Santa Clarita Valley, Antelope Valley, and parts of the San Fernando Valley. The program focuses on college readiness and admission, and helping students complete their intended degrees. It emphasizes cultivating a supportive academic community, a welcoming campus climate, and addressing participants’ distinctive academic, personal,

and career development requirements for their success in postsecondary education and beyond.

We are very excited to expand our support services through this grant to ensure student veterans have the resources they need to thrive academically.

Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook

“There are no comparable Veterans Upward Bound services in the region,” said Renard Thomas, director of the Veterans Resource Center at the college. “The target region is home to large numbers of low-income and first-generation veterans, many from underrepresented groups with no more than a high school education and who lack

college readiness, so this grant will enable us to reach a new population of student veterans.”

The VUB program will provide student veterans with academic advisement, career counseling, academic and career preparation, rigorous core curriculum, workshops, cohort-based learning, tutoring, summer enrichment, mentoring and peer support, professional development, college tours and enrichment, and an annual recognition event.

Since 2010, COC has successfully operated a Veterans Resource Center at its Valencia campus, offering a wide range of services such as student services advisement, academic counseling, VA benefits information, and veteran peer support.

A Veterans Resource Center was opened at the college’s Canyon Country campus in 2016.

For more information about the Veterans Resource Centers at College of the Canyons, visit canyons.edu/veterans.

COC AWARDED \$600,000 FOR OER/ZTC MATERIALS

The California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office awarded College of the Canyons \$600,000 to support the development of Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) and Open Educational Resources (OER) materials that can be used and repurposed by other California community colleges.

The three \$200,000 grants will allow the college to create ZTC and OER pathways for certificate programs in the fields of land surveying, water systems technology, and sustainable design and development.

“We are so excited to have received this grant from the Chancellor’s Office,” said Joy Shoemate, director of online education and distance learning at the college. “This means students will be able to complete these programs without paying for textbooks, which alleviates the financial burden so many students experience while completing their studies.”

The funding will allow COC instructors to create OER textbooks and redesign online courses with the support of an instructional designer.

In addition, faculty members will update course and textbook content for relevance and currency as part of their regular duties.

COC is committed to supporting the effort of faculty through the Online Education department that engages in OER search, formatting for accessibility, and course redesign assistance.

For more information about the college’s OER and ZTC efforts, please visit canyons.edu/ztc

COC RECEIVES \$500,000 HIGH ROAD TRAINING GRANT

College of the Canyons received a \$500,000 grant from the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) to develop High Road Training Partnerships (H RTP) with regional industry partners.

The H RTP initiative was created to address income inequality, economic competitiveness, and climate change through regional skills strategies designed to support economically and environmentally resilient communities in California.

“Through this partnership with the Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development

Corporation and the Advanced Technology Center (ATC), COC will have the ability to benefit dual-enrolled high school students, postsecondary technical students, large, underserved adult minority populations, unemployed military veterans and dislocated workers,” said Harriet Happel, dean of career education and integrative learning at the college.

The worker-focused training partnerships build skills for the state’s “high road” employers, which results in family-supporting jobs.

The project will focus on worker supply

and employer demand of the labor market in the Santa Clarita Valley. Applying the H RTP framework, COC will work with industry partners to prioritize equity and job quality in alignment with the implementation of strategies for transitioning to a carbon-neutral economy.

“The H RTP model will assist our partnership in opening opportunities for students as trained technicians, technologists, and students articulating into university engineering and related programs in advanced technologies,” added Happel.

ATC

FROM PAGE 1

staffing shortage in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys.

“There are literally jobs looking for people rather than people looking for jobs in this industry, so this helps fills this gap,” Garcia said.

The bicameral efforts of Garcia and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Calif) led to \$1 million in community project funding for a Robotics Automation Production Lab and Simulation Center at the college. Garcia also secured a separate \$1 million allocation in 2022 for the ATC.

In 2019 then-Assemblywoman Christy Smith successfully advocated for \$1.5 million to be included in the state budget for the ATC.

“We have to keep pace with China,” Garcia said. “It is humbling to think that our little town of Santa Clarita is such an instrumental piece of this defense.”

Speakers included Dr. Edel Alonso, Board of Trustees president; Dr. Dianne Van Hook, chancellor; Pat Hund, vice president, strike and special mission aircraft, Northrop Grumman; Joe Baldiga, national account manager, CNC Education and Workforce Development, FANUC North American; Dr. Omar Torres, assistant superintendent/vice president of instruction at the college; and Gary Horton, first vice chair, College of the Canyons Foundation.

Also attending were members of the Santa Clarita Community College District Board of Trustees, college staff, administrators, and students.

SILVER SPUR

FROM PAGE 3

all and doing my part to make Santa Clarita a great place to live, work and receive a world-class education is very fulfilling and I’ve made some amazing friendships along the way.”

Corn has been a member of the Santa Clarita Valley Rotary Club since 1991 and has served in the capacities of secretary, club service chair and as the 2013-14 president, earning the Distinguished Club Award, the highest honor a club can achieve in a district of over 40 active clubs. In Rotary, Corn holds the distinction of being a Paul Harris Fellow.

In addition, Corn has served on the boards of Campus after Dark, Single Mothers Outreach, and as President of the Santa Clarita Valley Escrow Association.

He is currently an affiliate member of the Southland Association of Realtors, Escrow Institute of California, and California Escrow Association.

BOND

FROM PAGE 1

bond expenditures, as well as our Foundation and district spending, demonstrates our commitment to full transparency and reassures the community that public funds are being used responsibly.”

Auditors reviewed documents associated with 52 percent of expenditures made with bond funds.

Purchase orders, approved invoices, bid documentation, contracts, and payments were reviewed and found to be compliant with state regulations and district board policies.

Addressing the Independent Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee, Chairman Fred Arnold commended committee members for their active involvement with the process.

“We have a great team,” said Arnold. “Your questions reflect the knowledge and expertise that you bring to this committee and commitment to fulfill your role and obligations. This college takes every inquiry seriously and so does our committee, and together we provide the assurance that bond funds are expended appropriately.”

The audit showed \$20 million of Measure E funds spent during 2022-23, primarily on construction of the Student Services/Learning Resources Center at the college’s Canyon Country campus,

as well as construction of the Intercultural Center and modernization of Boykin Hall at the college’s Valencia campus. In addition, Measure E funds were used to implement the college’s Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan.

“I would like to thank the Business Services department for their dedication and attention to detail, accuracy, timeliness, and compliance of capital project expenditures which ensures the fiscal integrity of the Measure E bond funds,” said Sharlene Coleal, assistant superintendent vice president of business services at the college.

Since 2017, the college has spent a total of \$124 million of Measure E bond revenue, according to the audit.

Funded projects include the parking structure at the Valencia campus, along with the Central Energy Plant, Don Takeida Science Center, Student Services/Learning Resources Center at the Canyon Country campus, as well as repairs and modernization of existing campus facilities.

Local voters approved Measure E in June 2016, providing the college with \$230 million to invest in facilities upgrades.

For more information, please visit canyons.edu/bonds.

Corn credits his 17-year-long membership with Vistage International with providing him the guidance and tools needed to be a better leader in making better decisions and creating better results.

A resident of Valencia, Corn enjoys spending time with his wife of 30 years, Carla, daughter Chelsea, son-in-law Mike, parents Linda and Ron, as well as his granddaughter Charlotte. He is looking forward to the arrival of his second grandchild, Jackson. In his free time, he also enjoys RV trips, fishing, cooking, barbecue competitions, wine, and travel.

The Silver Spur Award is the Foundation’s highest honor. It is given annually in recognition of the honoree’s commitment and service to the college and the wider community.

Previous Silver Spur recipients include: Randy Moberg and Mitzi Like-Moberg, Bruce Fortine; U.S. Rep. Howard P.

“Buck” McKeon (Ret.); Jack and Doreen Shine; Jill Mellady; The Newhall Family; Remo and Ami Belli, Barry and Pati Gump, Richard and Marian Sandnes, Diana Cusumano, Myrna and Gary Condie, Harold and Jacquie Petersen, Wayne Crawford, Rita Garasi, Tom Veloz, Charlotte and Frank Kleeman, Gary Cusumano, Jay and Joyce Rodgers, Tom Lee, Lou Garasi, Michael Berger, Roberta Veloz, Dick Luechtefeld, Robert Ormsby, LaVerne Harris, John Hoskinson, Tom Dierckman, Scott and Ruth Newhall, Elisha “Aggie” Agajanian, and Cliffie Stone.

This year’s event will be chaired by COC Foundation Board Member Dawn Abasta.

For more information about the 2024 Silver Spur event or to become an event sponsor, please contact the College of the Canyons Foundation at (661) 362-3434 or email cocfoundation@canyons.edu.

INSTRUCTOR NAMED CERTIFIED PARALEGAL CHAMPION

Lori Young, College of the Canyons paralegal professor, received the 2023 Certified Paralegal Champion Award from the National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA).

The nationwide award recognizes outstanding achievement by an individual or by a NALA-affiliated association in promoting and advancing the association's Certified Paralegal (CP) program within the legal profession.

"This award is shared with many at College of the Canyons, especially those who assisted with the launch of the CP exam study courses through our School of Personal and Professional Learning, available to California residents for free and a nominal fee for non-California residents," said Young.

In 2022, Young and Nicole Faudree, department chair of COC's paralegal program, launched the online CP exam study courses at COC that prepare students for the



Lori Young, College of the Canyons paralegal professor

knowledge and skills sections of the CP exam administered through NALA.

The two courses introduce students to sample exam questions based on a hypothetical case, and they analyze relevant legal material and demonstrate strong writing skills.

Young was nominated for the award by Kristine Custodio Suero, NALA chair and board member, who was impressed by her dedication and drive to develop COC's CP program exam study courses. Not only are

the preparation courses a free resource to California paralegals and paralegal students, but they are also accessible to out-of-state applicants at a low cost.

"I truly cannot think of anyone more deserving than Ms. Young to be recognized for her outstanding contributions and excellence in her field, specifically as the 2023 NALA Certified Paralegal Champion," said Custodio Suero. "She embodies excellence in the field and is a wonderful role model for all of us."

Approved by the American Bar Association, the college's paralegal program prepares students for positions as paralegals to improve the accessibility, quality, and affordability of legal services. COC offers 31 units (11 classes) in its associate degree or certificate in paralegal studies.

For more information about the paralegal studies program at COC, visit canyons.edu/paralegal.

CARNEGIE

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ment, and their work to transform knowledge into meaningful action," said Timothy Knowles, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. "They exemplify the true spirit of the Carnegie endorsement and the power of serving the public good."

The Carnegie Classifications are the nation's leading framework for categorizing and describing colleges and universities in the United States. Utilized frequently by policymakers, funders, and researchers, the classifications are a critical benchmarking tool for postsecondary institutions.

"Community engagement is vital to building long-lasting relationships, fostering a spirit of civic duty, and the overall enrichment of the communities we serve. We are committed to continue doing this very important work," said College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook. "We are extremely honored to have been selected for the 2024 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification."

COC's commitment to community engagement can be seen during election seasons, when the college's civic engagement program hosts numerous discussion panels and distributes nonpartisan materials that provide additional information on propositions and candidates. The school also participates in Tufts University's National



Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, which provides colleges and universities with data on student registration and voting rates. These numbers provide benchmarks to measure the success of future voting engagement efforts.

In addition, COC also participates in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a national, nonpartisan awards program recognizing colleges and universities for improving civic learning, political engagement, and student voting rates. As a part of this initiative, students, faculty, and staff have worked together to develop and implement an action plan to increase voting and civic engagement.

As a result, College of the Canyons was recognized by Washington Monthly magazine in 2018 as one of America's Best Colleges for Student Voting for its commitment to inspiring students to vote and actively participate in community decisions.

Dr. Patty Robinson, COC faculty director of civic and community engagement initiatives, says creating a civic and community engagement program worthy of recognition of receiving the prestigious Carnegie Elective Classification for Com-

munity Engagement has been a longtime goal.

"I am humbled to say that my goal has come true; but, most importantly, I am elated that the outstanding work of my colleagues has been honored," said Robinson. "Because of the exceptional examples of civic and community engagement displayed by students, faculty, staff, and administrators, COC now joins the ranks of a select group of the nation's colleges and universities dedicated to making a difference for the public good."

The college's community engagement efforts also include providing high-quality instruction to marginalized groups.

The 40 institutions classified in the 2024 cycle join the 350 currently classified institutions that earned classification in either 2015 or 2020, for a total of 368 campuses nationwide who are active holders of this important designation. Among the 2024 recipients of the classification, only three are community colleges.

Classification is awarded following an arduous self-study process by each institution, which is then assessed by a national review committee.

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification has been the leading framework for institutional assessment and recognition of community engagement in U.S. higher education for the past 19 years.

Women's Golf Team Wins STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

College of the Canyons women's golf won the 2023 California Community College Athletic Association (3C2A) State Championship with a stunning two-day performance at Hunter Ranch Golf Course in Paso Robles.

The state title is the program's fifth overall (2001, 2007, 2018, 2019, 2023) and third across the last five seasons. Canyons also finished runner-up to the state title in 2022. COC athletic programs did not compete during the 2020-21 season due to cancellations based on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cougars carded a four-player, two-day score of 660 (340/320) to top runner up Mt. San Antonio College by a whopping 14 strokes at the November tournament. The eight-team field included four teams from the Southern California Region and four Northern California programs.

Canyons ended the opening round in fourth place, three strokes back of the lead, but came

storming back on day two, playing some of its best golf of the season, with four of the five COC entrants improving on their day one scores.

"This (championship) is a testament to the journey (the players) made the entire season and how they've bonded as a team," said longtime head coach Gary Peterson. "I'm extremely proud of this group. We did not expect this at all."

Sophomore Motoko Shimoji was outstanding in leading the way for Canyons. She turned in a one-over-par score of 73 in the opening round then followed up with a 76 on Tuesday the second day to end the tourney one stroke off the individual lead.

Shimoji (149-75/76) was named to the 3C2A All-State team after finishing runner-up to Isabelle Olivas-Lowell 148 (68/79) of Citrus College for the individual state championship.

The individual runner-up result at the state tourney was the second in as many years for

Shimoji. She finished tied for the top spot at the 2022 state championships in Morro Bay before a tiebreaker placed her in second.

Flora Peugnet (160-85/75) shaved 10 strokes off her opening-round total to finish with the lowest second-day score among the field of 60 players. That placed the sophomore tied for eighth overall, just short of earning a second All-State selection.

Sophomore Brooke Maxwell (168-88/80) finished in a tie for 18th place after trimming eight strokes off her first round.

Elena Ortuno-Montalban (183-94/89) was the final player to score for Canyons with the freshman finishing in 42nd place. Nisha Gaulke (196-101/95) also competed but had her score scores scratched from the team tally.

The program's five state titles have all come under Peterson who has led the women's golf program since its inception in 1999.

Peterson has also won a record 10 3C2A state championships with the COC men's golf program, the most recent coming in 2022.



The Women's Golf Team won the 2023 state championship. Players included (from left) Elena Ortuno-Maltalban, Flora Peugnet, Linnéa Nilsson, Motoko Shimoji, Brooke Maxwell, and Nisha Gaulke. The team was coached by Gary Peterson (back row), who has won 15 state titles with the Men's and Women's Golf Teams at College of the Canyons.



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COURT NAMED AFTER LONGTIME COACH SMELSER

The College of the Canyons Athletic Department unveiled Lee Smelser Court during a dedication ceremony honoring the former longtime men’s basketball coach’s distinguished career and more than 30 years of service to the college.

The ceremony, held at the Cougar Cage in the West PE Gymnasium, was followed by the men’s basketball program’s annual Blue & Gold team scrimmage.

In attendance were Smelser’s former players, staff members, friends, and coaching colleagues.

The unveiling followed a decision by the Santa Clarita Community College District Board of Trustees to name the court in Smelser’s honor.

“Looking back at the history of the Santa Clarita Community College District, it’s humbling to see the dedication, energy and commitment to excellence that has been exhibited by the college’s faculty and staff who were here in the early years. Coach Smelser stands out among those rare founders and builders, and we are grateful for his dedication, expertise, and contributions,” said Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook. “His passion, determination, and focus on serving students set a standard that still inspires Cougar Athletics today.”

Smelser was hired by the district before the college’s official opening in 1969 to develop the physical education department and create the men’s basketball program.

He served as men’s basketball head coach for 31 years, tallying 455 career wins and four Western State Conference (WSC) championships (1985, 1991, 1992, 1994), while dedicating his time, energy, and mentorship to thousands of student-athletes. His coaching helped produce 73 All-WSC players and earned four WSC Coach of the Year awards.

Smelser also worked in a number of other capacities during his tenure, serving as the college’s athletic director for five years and head golf coach for two seasons. In addition, he launched the college’s softball team in 1984 and served as head coach through the 1985 season.

He retired as men’s basketball head coach in 2001 but continued to coach as an assistant on head coach Howard Fisher’s staff for two more seasons. Since moving on from coaching, Smelser has remained a member of the campus community and a regular at home games and other COC Athletics events.

Exemplifying the College of the Canyons spirit, Smelser continues to be respected across the state for his dedication to his athletes and his willingness to mentor new coaches.



Men’s basketball coach Howard Fisher presents former coach Lee Smelser with a plaque after the court in the Cougar Cage was named in Smelser’s honor.