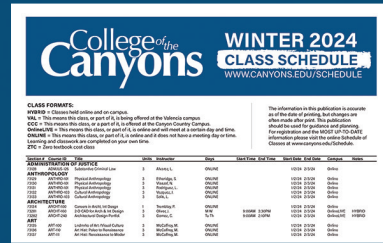




# Breaking news



**CLASS SCHEDULE INSIDE** ▶

**WINTER 2023**

COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS • THE PROMISE OF OPPORTUNITY SINCE 1969

## 300-Plus Classes Available for Winter Term

**D**o you need a class or two to get on track toward earning a degree or preparing for a new career? If so, now is the time to take advantage of the hundreds of classes available during the upcoming winter term.

Registration is now under way for the winter 2024 term, which packs more than 300 class sections into a concentrated five-week format – perfect for getting ahead or completing classes needed to transfer to four-year universities.

The term features a wide selection

of general education “core” classes necessary for degree completion or transfer. The winter term starts Tuesday, Jan. 2, and runs through Feb. 3. The spring semester gets under way Monday, Feb. 5.

Classes are available in traditional classroom settings at both the Valencia and Canyon Country campuses, as well as a variety of online and hybrid formats.

The enclosed schedule of classes for the winter term has all of the details. To register or learn more, please visit:

• [www.canyons.edu/schedule](http://www.canyons.edu/schedule)

### Free Lifelong Learning Classes

**T**he School of Personal and Professional Learning, which provides lifelong learning classes to residents of all ages at no cost, will offer more than 60 short-term classes throughout January and early February.

Courses include Foundations of HR Management, Employment Law

Fundamentals, HR Management Support Activities, Computing and Internet Fundamentals, Word Processing Basics, Spreadsheet Basics, Introduction to Access, and GED Preparation.

To take advantage of these tuition-free classes, please visit:

• [www.canyons.edu/ppl](http://www.canyons.edu/ppl)



## Advanced Technology Center Opens

**C**ollege of the Canyons held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 6 for 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 construction technologies.

“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 will house 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.

See TECHNOLOGY | 4

### HIGH-TECH

The Advanced Technology Center, a 13,500-square-foot manufacturing and CNC lab that prepares students for careers in advanced manufacturing, welding, and construction technologies, is now open in an interim location in the Centre Pointe business park. A ribbon-cutting ceremony (right) was held Oct. 6. A permanent location in a purpose-built facility is under development nearby.



## Intercultural Center Aims for Inclusivity

**C**ollege of the Canyons held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 14 for the Intercultural Center (ICC), a 11,644-square-foot space that provides a welcoming, safe, and supportive learning environment that builds an inclusive community and values diversity.

“Today’s celebration is a tribute to symbolize our dedication to supporting our campus community – students, faculty, staff, and administrators, fostering an environment where all voices are included, heard, and every culture is celebrated for the rich resources and potential that they bring to the table,” College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said.

Located on the ground floor of Bonelli Hall, the ICC is also home to the college’s Undocumented Resources Center,

See INTERCULTURAL | 4



College of the Canyons  
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355



# Equitable Course Placement Honors

College of the Canyons has been named a **2023 Champion for Excelling in Equitable Course Placement** in Campuswide English Enrollment, Latinx English Enrollment, and Black English Enrollment by The Campaign for College Opportunity (TCCO).

"We are honored to have been distinguished once again by The Campaign for College Opportunity for our determined efforts to increase equity for our students," College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. "The work we have done to increase transfer-level completion in English and math has significantly reduced racial-equity gaps in student achievement. We remain resolved to continue removing student barriers to academic success."

"As we celebrate the record number of California community colleges that are placing students in transfer-level courses, we must remember that equity and success for all students, particularly Black and Latinx students, must be at the forefront of our efforts," wrote

***'The work we have done to increase transfer-level completion in English and math has significantly reduced racial-equity gaps in student achievement.'***

— DR. DIANNE G. VAN HOOK

Michele Siqueiros, TCCO president. "These colleges are leading the way in providing equitable access to higher education and ensuring that we break down barriers to student success. By providing students with the support and resources they need, we are making it clear that their college dreams are a priority, and we are helping to build a stronger, more prosperous California. After all, California succeeds when students complete college and earn a degree, certificate or transfer to a university as a result of a stronger and smoother pathway."

The TCCO found that the college's continuous efforts toward equity led to the successful support of 100 percent of students campuswide, including Latinx and Black students, enrolling directly into transfer-level English coursework.

In 2021, COC was awarded the prestigious Bellwether Award for its innovative approach to assessment and course sequence redesign in English and mathematics. In an effort to reduce racial equity gaps, the college restructured its procedures to increase transfer-level completion in English and math.



## NEWS BRIEFS

### COLLEGE AWARDED \$3 MILLION TITLE V GRANT

The Department of Education awarded College of the Canyons a \$3 million Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) grant to support Hispanic students pursuing degrees in STEM and increase overall retention and completion rates of Hispanic students attending college for the first time. "As a Hispanic-serving institution, COC will be better equipped than ever before to provide our Hispanic students with the tools, resources, and support they need to academically thrive in STEM fields," said Dr. Omar Torres, chief instructional officer. The five-year grant provides funding to support Hispanic students pursuing STEM degrees through a multi-faceted approach of redesigning Open Educational Resources with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) elements, providing student counseling and support services, as well as increasing the availability of MESA-type services.

### GRANT AIDS NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

College of the Canyons was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to fund a Native American Student Support and Success Program (NASSSP). The five-year grant ensures the educational success of Native American students and strengthens K-12 pathways to and through the California Community Colleges system, including transfer to the University of California and California State University systems. The grant will also connect students with Native American mentors to empower and develop leadership skills. Currently, the college has a Native American and Indigenous Alliance, which helps Native American students learn to navigate college, connect with college mentors, meet with counselors and financial aid advisors, and discuss issues in a safe and welcoming space. The grant will allow the college to expand services to NAIA students by hiring a full-time coordinator. The college plans to work with local tribes to develop an NASSSP plan as part of its objectives.

### GRANT FOCUSES ON VETERAN STUDENT SUCCESS

College of the Canyons received a \$598,718 from the Department of Education to support a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (CEVSS) at the Canyon Country campus. The three-year grant allows the college to establish a center at the college's second campus, expanding vital services and resources for veteran students. "This grant will help us deliver the high-quality and nuanced support resources that veteran students need at the Canyon Country campus," said Renard Thomas, director of the Veterans Resource Center. "We are very excited to be able to operate a center that mirrors the services offered at the Valencia campus." As a single point of contact, the CEVSS will work to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students through a dedicated support team and the enhancement of online services. The project will also support a full-time program coordinator, as well as engagement activities such as veteran cohort events and tutoring services to help position veterans for social and academic success.

### EDISON AWARDS 21 FIRE TECH SCHOLARSHIPS

Twenty-one fire technology students each received \$1,000 scholarships from Edison International to cover tuition, books and school-related fees. The students — Luis Alonso, Jason Anderson, Michael Durham, Caiden Helgeson, Anthony Ingrassi, Dessire Jimenez, Nicholas Julian, Gavin Langston, Marie Maguellal, Angel Martinez, Kimuli Daudi Mwesigwa, Michael Myrick, Evan Ogden, Julie Rodriguez, Samuel Sierra, Diego Takishita, Jordyn Tibayan-Kent, Tommy Torres, Anthony Trujillo, Isaac Wilkinson, and Blake Yakel — had to have a cumulative GPA of 2.7 or higher, be enrolled in the fire technology program, and respond to four essay questions about their fire service career goals. "Our program's mission stresses the importance of preparing students to become well-educated, well-trained, and dedicated first responders," said Keith Kawamoto, chair of the Fire Technology Department. "Edison's support helps us accomplish this mission by providing students with resources that support their education, training, and personal growth."



## Breaking news

Breaking News is published by the College of the Canyons Public Information Office to inform the community about programs, events, issues and accomplishments of the Santa Clarita Valley's community college. It is distributed to residences, P.O. boxes and businesses within the Santa Clarita Community College District. **Advertising is not accepted.**

**MAIL:** College of the Canyons Public Information Office  
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91355

**EMAIL:** pio@canyons.edu



Frederick Bobola (second from left) was honored as California's 2023 Classified Employee of the Year.

## Bobola Named State Employee of Year

Frederick Bobola, an instructional laboratory coordinator at College of the Canyons, has been named 2023 Classified Employee of the Year by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. Bobola was one of five California classified employees to receive the prestigious statewide award at the Board of Governors meeting in Sacramento.

"When I heard the news, I was quite surprised and humbled," Bobola said. "The support I received from my co-workers and family was an amazing feeling to experience. Winning this award is not only a great personal accomplishment, but also it is truly an honor to represent College of the Canyons, a place I have called home since 2004 as a student."

The annual award is given to community college classified employees who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to the Vision for Success, which is the mission of the California Community College System, and equitable student outcomes.

"I wish to congratulate Fred Bobola for receiving this statewide recognition from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office," College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. "His passion and dedication toward student success is inspirational in everything he does and is a testament to the stellar caliber of employees at the college."

Bobola first came to the college in 2004 as a former student athlete and credits an influential English professor for changing his life. He began working as an English tutor at The Learning Center before transferring to UCLA to complete his bachelor's degree in English literature.

After graduating UCLA and working in the private sector, Bobola fulfilled his dream of working in higher education by returning to College of the Canyons, where he has served as an instructional coordinator for English, social behavioral sciences, humanities, and modern languages at the TLC.

## \$1.4 Million Grant to Assist Veterans

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 student veterans succeed in pursuing postsecondary education by addressing gaps in support services and infrastructure.

The five-year grant partnership will provide intensive services to 125 eligible student veterans in the Santa Clarita Valley, Antelope Valley, and parts of the San Fernando Valley.

"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," said Renard Thomas, director of the college's Veterans Resource Center.

"We are very excited about how we will be able to expand our support services through this grant to ensure

student veterans have the resources they need to thrive academically."

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.

"There are no comparable VUB services in the region," Thomas said.

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.

The college opened a Veterans Resource Center at the Canyon Country campus in 2016.



# Chancellor Appointed to National ‘Promise’ Board

College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook was unanimously appointed to serve on the College Promise National Advisory Board, a nonpartisan initiative dedicated to advancing tuition-free programs across two- and four-year colleges across the nation to increase the economic, social, and civic mobility of students.

“I am honored to have been appointed to College Promise National Advisory Board,” Dr. Van Hook said. “I look forward to working with the board to continue to advance and develop support to ensure that access to a high-quality college education is available to all.”

With 35 years at the helm of College of the Canyons, Dr. Van Hook is the longest-serving CEO in the California

community college system.

College of the Canyons was one of the first colleges to launch a College Promise program – First Year Promise – in fall 2017 with a grant from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO). Of 51 community college districts that applied, COC was one of only 14 colleges awarded a CCCCCO grant through the California College Promise Innovation Grant Program.

The COC Foundation Board of Directors – then under the leadership of board member Steve Corn – successfully completed a campaign to raise more than \$500,000 to expand the program’s resources.

Rebranded as Canyons Promise in 2019, the program has helped 4,053 students save more than \$3.3 million

in tuition and fees. Students in the program have outperformed their COC counterparts by consistently completing a high number of units and earning a higher grade point average in their first semester, and have persisted at a higher rate from semester to semester and year to year.

The College Promise National Advisory Board was created in 2015 by President Barack Obama as a push to offer all students two free years of community college tuition. The advisory board consists of leaders in education, government, business, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropy, as well as students. Since then, the national movement has grown to more than 425 Promise programs in local communities in every state and 31 statewide Promise programs across the country.



## 35 EXCEPTIONAL YEARS

Hundreds of colleagues and community members celebrated Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook’s 35 years of visionary leadership during a reception at the University Center on Sept. 6. A who’s-who of local, state, and national leaders representing education, government, and business – as well as current and past college employees, student leaders, California community college chancellors, statewide trustee leaders, Board of Governors members, mentees, and friends – praised her vision, perseverance, and accomplishments while sharing personal stories. “I can truly say that I love what I do because of my good friends and talented colleagues throughout the state – and the people whom I’m honored to share the work with on a daily basis,” Dr. Van Hook said. “I know of no other place in California, no other community, no other combination of people that is as great as this group of people. I thank you for enabling me to lead and to play a role in building this place, and for inspiring me to pursue the vision for this college.” The event also served as the official unveiling of the **Dream It Do It Innovation Award**, established by the College of the Canyons Foundation in honor of Dr. Van Hook’s courage, belief in possibilities and potential, commitment to collaboration, the potential in people, and innovation – and her transformation of College of the Canyons into one of the leading community colleges in the nation.

## Rarely Conferred Award from FivePoint

College of the Canyons Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook received the rarely-awarded O – C (pronounced “oh bar see”) award from FivePoint at a community celebration event held to celebrate her 35 years of leadership at COC.

The award was presented by FivePoint Executive Vice President Don Kimball at the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center on Sept. 6.

Initially awarded only to Newhall Land employees in recognition of exemplary efforts, the award is now presented to a select few community leaders for their commitment to the Santa Clarita Valley.

“I feel incredibly honored to join the ranks of innovative individuals who have received this award for their deeply rooted commitment toward making the Santa Clarita Valley a better place,” Dr. Van Hook said. “I wish to thank FivePoint for their dedicated support of

College of the Canyons and our mission to make higher education accessible in our community.”

The award features a miniature replica of the O – C cattle brand that was purchased by Henry Mayo Newhall in 1871 along with an extensive cattle operation. Handmade at the Newhall Orchard by the ranch foreman, the brand has been used for decades on the Newhall Ranch and has grown to symbolize the company’s high standards.

“Dr. Van Hook exemplifies community leadership at the highest level and has had an immense impact on both College of the Canyons and our community over the past 35 years,” Kimball said. “It was an honor to take the opportunity, on behalf of FivePoint leadership, past and present, to recognize her accomplishments at her 35-year anniversary celebration and award her with our highest honor, an O – C award.”



FivePoint Executive Vice President Don Kimball (left) presents the award to Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook.



# Cinema Instructor Awarded Prestigious Annie Award

Cinema instructor Mindy Johnson received the prestigious June Foray Honor at the 50th Annie Awards. The juried award is given to individuals who have made a significant and benevolent or charitable impact on the art and industry of animation.

"I was completely gob smacked," Johnson said upon hearing the news. "I did not expect it at all. When I got the call, I was in complete shock."

Johnson was recognized for her expertise, continued research and ground-breaking discoveries into the earliest women and under-represented groups in the animation and film industry.

"By exposing the past, I try to illuminate the future and cause change," she said. "Change in the industry is happening, but

it's moving slowly."

Her latest discovery is believed to be the earliest surviving hand-drawn animation, animated and directed by a woman: Bessie Mae Kelley, a pioneering animator who worked with Bray Studios in late 1917. Thanks to Kelley's grandnephew who had stored the film, Johnson was able to restore two of her surviving films.

"This discovery completely changes our entire cinematic history," she said. "It challenges the myth that women were not present at the dawn of the animation industry."

Johnson's forthcoming book "The Only Woman Animator: Bessie Mae Kelley & Women at the Dawn of an Industry" introduces Kelley's work to the world and highlights her early contributions to the an-

imation industry.

Johnson, who has been teaching film studies and film history at COC as an adjunct instructor for 20 years, also teaches animation history at CalArts and Drexel University.

"The cinema studies program and the School of Humanities are so very proud to count Mindy among our ranks," said Andy McCutcheon, dean of the School of Humanities.

"I can't think of a more deserving recipient of this prestigious award. Mindy is not only a ground-breaking, recognized scholar in her field, she is also an amazing teacher who inspires our students through her example, especially women who aspire to a career in the fields of cinema studies, animation, or film making."



MINDY JOHNSON

# Instructor Named Certified Paralegal Champion



LORI YOUNG

Paralegal professor Lori Young has been named the recipient of the 2023 Certified Paralegal Champion Award by 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,"

Young said.

In 2022, Young and Nicole Faudree, department chair of the paralegal program, launched the online CP exam study courses that prepare students for the 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 students analyze relevant legal material, as well as demonstrate strong writing skills.

"Without the hard work of many at the college, and our partnership with NALA, this award would not have been possible," Young said. "I wish to thank Kristine Custodio Suero for the nomination and Nicole Faudree for her ongoing support and men-

torship with the exam study courses project."

Young was nominated by Kristine Custodio Suero, NALA chair and board member, who was impressed by her dedication and drive to develop the CP program exam study courses. Not only are the preparation courses a free resource to California paralegals and 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," Suero said. "She embodies excellence in the field and is a wonderful role model for all of us."

## INTERCULTURAL

FROM PAGE 1

LGBTQ+ Center, Native American Student Support and Success Program, and 10 alliance groups. It will host workshops, events, meetings, open study space, counseling services, student services referrals, and trainings for college staff and community groups.

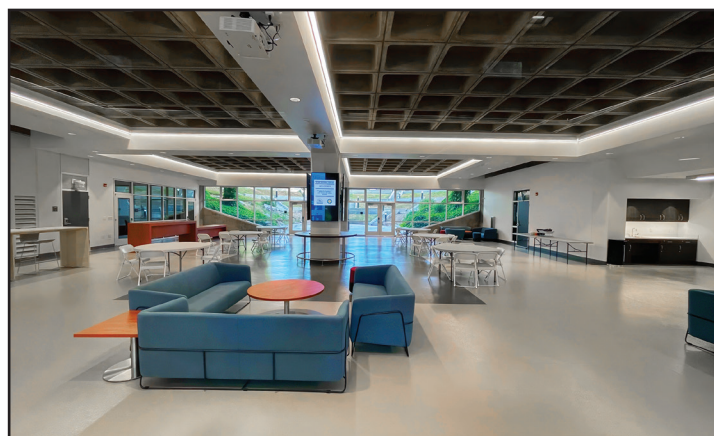
"The ICC is our centralized location for our inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility and anti-racist district-wide efforts," said Dr. Diane Fiero, deputy chancellor and chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. "The ICC strives to provide a welcoming, safe and supportive learning environment that builds an inclusive community and values diversity."

Dr. Abdimalik Buul of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office spoke about the dynamism of culture and how the ICC will contribute to a culture of inclusivity.

"This itself is a culture that COC is establishing, a culture that is no longer acceptable just to have a sense of belonging but to actually belong, to be the fabric of this institution, that all of our identities matter, that every single person no matter what your background is, you bring some kind of value to this institution," Buul said.

Representatives for state Sen. Scott Wilk, Congressman Mike Garcia, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger also attended.

An interim ICC was also launched at the Canyon Country campus. Both were funded by student equity and reengagement funds awarded by the state Chancellor's Office.



## TECHNOLOGY

FROM PAGE 1

"This is a very important first step," said Congressman Mike Garcia's (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 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.

Earlier this year, 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.

"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; 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.



# English Instructor Honored for Excellence in Education

Angeli Francois, an English adjunct instructor, has received the 2023 Hayward Award for Excellence in Education from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) for her dedication and commitment to serving and empowering students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Francois was one of four California faculty members to receive the statewide award.

"I was in awe of my colleagues and peers just to nominate me and send my name forward to qualify for the award," said Francois, who started teaching at COC in 2016. "It's such a collaborative effort to do equity work. It can't be done without collaborating and the school has given me the space to do that."

Sponsored annually by the Foundation for California Community Colleges, the Hayward Award recognizes community college full-time and part-time faculty members who demonstrate the highest level of commitment to their students, college, and profession.

"I wish to congratulate Angeli Francois for her passionate equity advocacy at College of the

Canyons," Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. "Her work has helped pave the way for more inclusivity, which is of vital importance for the success and well-being of our entire campus community. She does what she does from her heart and with dignifying care and high standards."

Award recipients are nominated by their college academic senate for also having a record of outstanding performance of professional activities and on-campus participation.

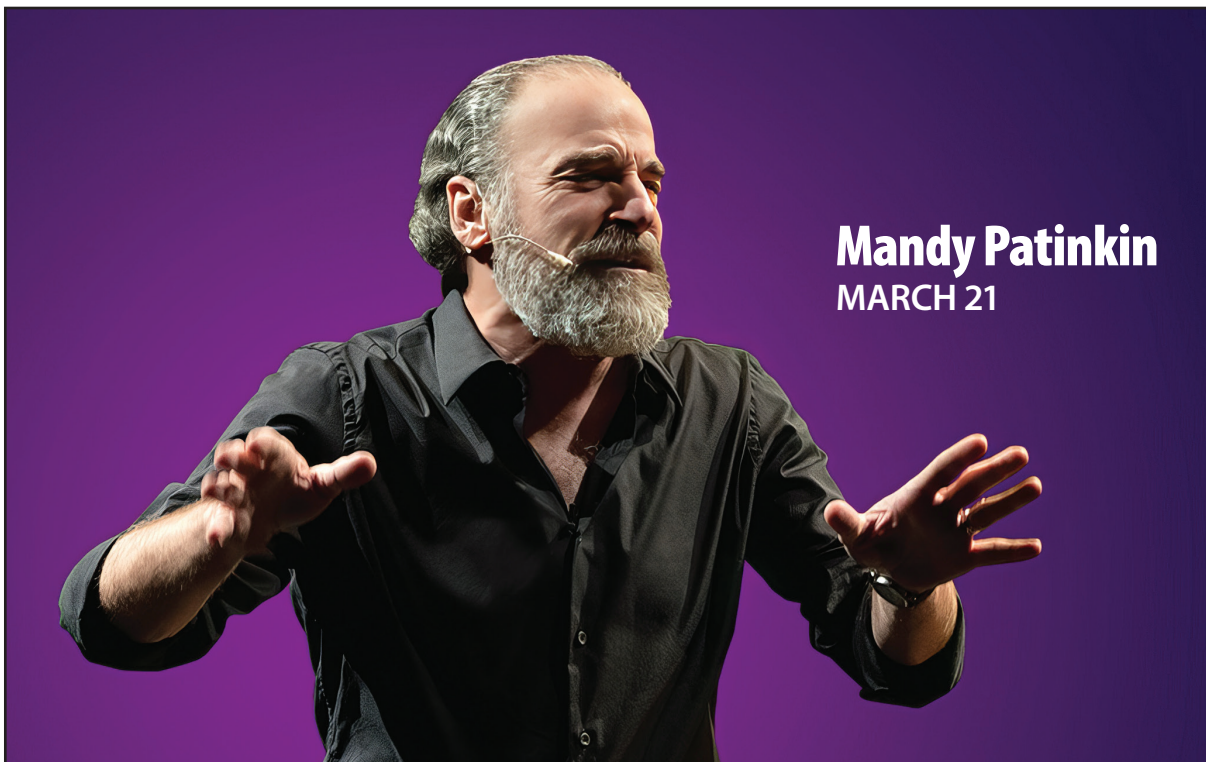
Francois was honored by the COC Academic Senate with its own excellence in education award in 2022. The Academic Senate's Executive Committee voted unanimously to nominate her for the statewide Hayward Award.

"On behalf of the Academic Senate and the entire faculty, I want to offer my congratulations to Professor Angeli Francois for being honored with the Hayward Award recognizing excellence in education," said David Andrus, COC Academic Senate president. "Because over 100 community colleges are eligible to nominate faculty for this award, the honor is quite significant."



English instructor Angeli Francois (second from left) receives the 2023 Hayward Award for Excellence in Education.

## SPOTLIGHT SERIES



**Mandy Patinkin**  
MARCH 21



**Melissa Etheridge**  
APRIL 4



**DAUGHTRY**  
JANUARY 17



**Jake Shimabukuro**  
DECEMBER 21

### CAN'T-MISS ACTS

The Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center at College of the Canyons is proud to present its new Spotlight Series, with upcoming acts such as ukulele phenom Jake Shimabukuro on Thursday, Dec. 21; platinum-selling rock band Daughtry on Wednesday, Jan. 17; Tony-winning Broadway legend Mandy Patinkin on Thursday, March 21; and Grammy-winning performer Melissa Etheridge on Thursday, April 4. For tickets, visit [www.canyonspac.com](http://www.canyonspac.com) or call (661) 362-5304.

# College Ranked Among Top Colleges for Hispanics

College of the Canyons has been ranked nationally No. 18 and 31 in *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine* for enrolling the largest number of Hispanic students and granting the most degrees, respectively, among the nation's 1,294 two-year colleges.

The magazine rankings for the Top 100 Community Colleges for Hispanics are based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data for community colleges with the highest number of Hispanic students enrolled during fall 2021 and spring 2022.

"As a Hispanic-serving institution, we are proud to be ranked once again among

the nation's top colleges and universities for Hispanic students," said Dr. Diane Fiero, deputy chancellor and chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer. "It speaks to our unwavering commitment to serve the needs of our diverse students."

According to the data, the college had a Hispanic population of 13,631 students, totaling 48.8 percent of the total student enrollment, which was 27,936 in the year 2021-22. That same year, of the 3,257 associate degrees awarded by the college, 1,490 of degree recipients were Hispanic students.

Many Hispanic students have benefited from innovative programs such as Canyons Promise, which gives incoming

students the resources they need to transition smoothly into college life. Of the 7,183 students the program has served since launching in 2017, 54 percent self-identified as Hispanic.

The program provides increased opportunities for new full-time students to achieve their educational goals by waiving tuition and fees for their first year.

Students who maintain the program's requirements may have their Canyons Promise benefits extended to their second year of study.

Accepted students enroll in a one-year sequence of courses with priority registration, preceded by a week-long summer boot camp to learn skills needed to be a success-

ful student. Canyons Promise courses are offered with the benefit of free Open Educational Resources to use as textbooks, peer mentors, and other learning community elements. To ensure students remain on track, ongoing counseling and student support is also offered. Additionally, Canyons Promise students receive parking passes or city bus passes.

*The Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine's* annual ranking is based on total student enrollment, the percentage of Hispanic students in attendance, two-year schools awarding the most associate degrees to Hispanic students, and the percentage of associate degrees to Hispanic students by two-year schools.



# Herrick Set for Induction into Statewide Hall of Fame

Recently retired women's basketball coach Greg Herrick, who guided the program to 611 career wins, will be inducted into the California Community College Women's Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in spring 2024.

Herrick's 30-year career at the college included 16 Western State Conference South Division Championships (1994, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2016 and 2018) in 29 seasons. Canyons did not compete during the 2020-21 year due to COVID-19 cancellations.

He left the program in June 2022, boasting a career record of 611-288, good for a .680 winning percentage. His teams also qualified for the CCCAA Southern California Regional Postseason in 24 seasons, including a run of 21 straight appearances

from 1994 to 2014.

Herrick was named WSC South Coach of the Year 10 times, and his players have earned 27 All-State selections, 12 Conference Player of the Year Awards, and one State Player of the Year award.

"It's always nice to be recognized for the hard work and the commitment that goes with being a coach, especially when it's by your peers," Herrick said.

"My original intention when I took over the program in 1992 was to successfully compete with the state's best programs," he said. "I believe we accomplished that and more by building our program into one of the state's very best.

"Any honors that I may receive as a result of that, I share with the many players I was fortunate enough to coach."

In 1997, Herrick guided the team all the

way to the state championship game, eventually finishing runner-up to Ventura College. That team, along with the program's longtime assistant coach Harlan Perlman, were inducted into the COC Athletic Hall of Fame on March 29.

Perlman, who passed away in November 2022, was inducted into the CCCWBCA Hall of Fame as part of the 2022 class, becoming the first assistant coach to be selected for the Hall of Fame.

He and Herrick coached together for a combined 32 seasons at Hart High School and COC.

"I will always be thankful and appreciative of College of the Canyons for giving me this opportunity and allowing me the freedom to build our program over the past 30 years," Herrick said upon his retirement last summer. "We accomplished a lot."



GREG HERRICK

## LEE SMELSER COURT

# 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 March decision by the Santa Clarita Community College District Board of Trustees to name the court in Smelser's honor.

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.



Lee Smelser (center, holding basketball) is surrounded by family, friends, former players, and coaching colleagues during the unveiling of Lee Smelser Court.

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.

# It's Official: New Student Services Building is Open

College of the Canyons held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Student Services & Learning Resources Center, a new four-story building at the center of the Canyon Country campus.

Adjacent to the state-of-the-art Don Takeda Science Center, the 55,000-square-foot facility brings together key student support services such as admissions and records, financial aid, counseling and tutoring, along with a library, classrooms, offices, and other campus services.

"This building is a significant turning point in the life and development of the Canyon Country campus as it provides new and much-needed spaces that will facilitate tutoring and research while expanding our ability to collaborate and use technology," Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. "The Canyon Country campus and our commitment to develop it is the visible demonstration of COC's dedication to meeting community needs, and well as a testament to the ingenuity, passion, and can-do spirit that marks what we undertake at College of the Canyons."

Attendees included members of the college's Board of Trustees, legislative and community leaders, and college staff, administrators, and students.

As a mirror building to the Takeda Science Center, the SSLRC will help serve as a focal point for students and visitors.

"I have been with the college for nearly 16 years and stared at renderings of these facilities for more than a decade,



The new Student Services & Learning Resources Center was officially unveiled at the Canyon Country campus on April 25.

it has been a wonderful delight to be part of that transformation in action and to witness those thoughtful innovations in development that have made those renderings a reality," said Dr. Ryan Theule, vice president of the Canyon Country campus. "The reality exceeds the vision. This facility does help Canyon Country to be an even more comprehensive campus and it builds further points of connection with our students and community."

Dr. Van Hook received recognition from representatives of Assemblywoman Pilar Schiavo, Sen. Scott Wilk, Congressman Mike Garcia, and County Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

Construction of the Student Services & Learning Resources Center was funded by Measure E.

Board of Trustees President Dr. Edel Alonso expressed appreciation for the community's support of the college.

"The reason we are building new buildings and enhancing our capacity to serve students is because we enjoy such strong support from our community," Alonso said. "From voting to approve the Measure E bond – which funded this project – to serving as advisory board members, donating to the Foundation, or volunteering your time, you enable us to accomplish so much more than we could on our own."





The Don Takeda Science Center (above, left) and Student Services & Learning Resources Center (above, right, and far-left photo) have been completed at the Canyon Country campus. The Student Services & Learning Resources Center significantly increases student resources and features open, flexible interior spaces (left).

## Independent 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 2021-22 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 non-compliance.

“The audit results demonstrate our ongoing commitment to fiscal transparency and our mission to expand access to high-quality education and state-of-the-art facilities that can accommodate the needs of our students and staff as well as the training needed to support our local businesses and their workforce training needs while supporting community members who wish to continue to grow and advance in their chosen fields of employment,” Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said.

Auditors reviewed documents associated with 71 percent of expenditures made with bond funds, which is a higher percent-

age compared to normal audits due to the large dollar amount associated with capital expenditures. Purchase orders, approved invoices, bid documentation, contracts, and payments were reviewed and found to be compliant with state regulations and district board policies.

Independent Citizens Bond Oversight Committee Chairman Fred Arnold commended the district for providing ample documentation to facilitate the independent audit.

“Seventy one percent of an audit is very high,” Arnold said. “There’s a ton of work that goes into documenting all of this for the whole community. I commend the college and am grateful to fellow committee members for volunteering their time. I am honored to serve with you.”

Several other committee members said it was an honor to be associated with the college and expressed appreciation for all the hard work on the part of staff for ensuring that bond funds are used appropriately to complete facility projects that benefit students and the community.

The audit showed \$21 million of Measure E funds spent during 2020-21, primarily on construction of the Student Services & Learning Resources Center and the

*“The audit results demonstrate our ongoing commitment to fiscal transparency and our mission to expand access to high-quality education and state-of-the-art facilities...”*

– DR. DIANNE G. VAN HOOK, CHANCELLOR

Don Takeda Science Center at the Canyon Country campus.

“I want to take a moment to thank business services managers and staff, as well as Mr. Jim Schrage, for their excellent efforts in ensuring that this audit is done in the way that was just described by the auditors, as we didn’t have any findings or issues with the audit,” said Sharlene Coleal, assistant superintendent vice president of business services at the college.

Schrage, who recently retired from his position as assistant superintendent/vice president of facilities, praised the college’s business services department for its fiscal acumen.

“They do a spectacular job,” Schrage said. “To get a no-comment financial audit

year after year after year – they are to be applauded for their work on this.”

Since 2017, the college has spent a \$104 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, Science Center, and 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.

• [www.canyons.edu/administration/committees/bondoversight](http://www.canyons.edu/administration/committees/bondoversight)

## Bond Oversight Committee Welcomes New Members

The College of the Canyons Board of Trustees approved the appointment of seven new members to the Santa Clarita Community College District Independent Citizens Bond Oversight Committee at its Oct. 11 meeting.

Committee members serve two- or three-year terms, and each member represents a specific category as required by Prop. 39. The new members are Ellie Wingo (student government), John Estrada (or-

ganization representing local business community), Kevin MacDonald (senior citizens organization), Missy Cindrich (bona-fide taxpayers organization), James DeBree (community at large), Dan Masnada (community at large), and Martin Fox (community at large).

The Board of Trustees in 2022 approved the appointment of Fred Arnold to serve as a representative from a Santa Clarita Community College District Support

Organization (COC Foundation).

Outgoing members Don Kimball, Barbara Cochran, Calvin Hedman, Michael Lebecki, Spencer Leafdale, Michael Hogan, and Stephanie Smith were recognized by the board for their service.

The Independent Citizens Bond Oversight Committee oversees the compliance of Measure E bond funds with Prop. 39 spending requirements.

Measure E is the \$230 million general

obligation bond passed by local voters in 2016.

The committee is charged with informing the public concerning the college’s expenditure of bond proceeds, reviewing expenditure reports and audits to ensure that bond funds were spent in accordance with the approved ballot language and in compliance with state regulations, and presenting an annual report of its findings to the Board of Trustees.



**THEY DID IT AGAIN!**

# Women's Golf Team Wins State Championship

The College of the Canyons women's golf team won the 2023 California Community College Athletic Association State Championship with a stunning two-day performance at Hunter Ranch Golf Course in Paso Robles on Nov. 13 and 14.

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

"I congratulate the women's golf team and coach Gary Peterson on their impressive achievement," Chancellor Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook said. "They reflect the ideals embraced by College of the Canyons and its athletic programs, while continually striving to be the very best in all that we endeavor."

The team carded a four-player, two-day score of 660 (340/320) to top runner up Mt. San Antonio College by a whopping 14 strokes. 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 2, playing some of its best golf of the season, with four of the five COC players improving on their Day 1 scores.

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

Sophomore Motoko Shimoji led 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 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 indi-



The women's golf team, led by coach Gary Peterson (center, rear), won the state championship in stunning fashion.

vidual state championship.

The individual runner-up result at the 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 Peugeot (160-85/75) shaved 10 strokes off her opening-round total to finish with Tuesday's low 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 five state titles have all come under Peterson, who has led the women's golf program since its inception in 1999.

**5-WEEK WINTER SESSION BEGINS JANUARY 2**

**SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS FEBRUARY 5**

**REGISTER NOW!**

**[WWW.CANYONS.EDU/SCHEDULE](http://WWW.CANYONS.EDU/SCHEDULE)**

**ALWAYS FLEXIBLE. AFFORDABLE. REMARKABLE.**