

**COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS FOUNDATION**  
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91355

**College of the Canyons Board of Directors**  
**Meeting - Minutes**

January 27, 2026, 5:30 PM  
UCEN 107

**Members Present:** Gary Horton (Foundation Chair), Shawna Mann (Foundation CEO), Jasmine Ruys (Acting Interim President), Jason Hinkle (Foundation Treasurer), Dawn Abasta, Lisa Burke, Joyce Carson, Shawn Fonder, Bruce Fortine, Tamara Gurney, Eric Harnish, William Harwood, Arnaldo Jaquez, Jill Mellady, Randy Moberg, Karina Momary, Jeremy Patrich, Scott Schauer, Matt Sreden, Cindy Stephens, Paul Wickline

**Members Absent:** Steve Corn, Tom Dierckman, Malik Jackson, Taylor Kellstrom, Brian Kogle, Jesse McClure, T Meyer, Leticia Meza-Guerrero, George Reyes, Doreen Shine, Joyce Shulman

**Foundation Staff Present:** Desiree Dodd (Director of Development and Engagement), Melayn Poladian (Foundation Relations Coordinator III), Dylan Mahoney (Events and Marketing Coordinator), Mayra Cuellar (Administrative Assistant V)

**District Staff Present:** Carlos Guerrero – Trustee Liaison

**Affiliated Guests Present:** Mat Crater, Ted Jacenda

**Other Attendees:**

**1. PRELIMINARY FUNCTIONS**

**1.1 Call to Order/Establishment of a Quorum** **Gary Horton**  
Noting that a quorum had been established, Gary Horton called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

**1.2 Approval of Meeting Agenda** **Gary Horton**  
Gary Horton requested a motion to approve the meeting agenda.

<b>Motion to Approve:</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Vote - Passed:</b>
Joyce Carson	Jill Mellady	21 Yes
		0 No
		0 Abstention

**1.3 Approval of Meeting Minutes: November 18, 2025** **Gary Horton**  
Gary Horton requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Foundation Board meeting on November 18, 2025.

<b>Motion to Approve:</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Vote - Passed:</b>
Bruce Fortine	Joyce Carson	21 Yes
		0 No
		0 Abstention

**1.4 Change in Foundation Staff, Board Leadership, and New Trustee Liaison** **Shawna Mann**  
Shawna Mann shared updates regarding Foundation staff and board leadership. She shared that Monica Lee Copeland departed in December, and Mayra Cuellar joined as an

administrative assistant in January. Scott Schauer has resigned as vice chair but remains on the board; Gary Horton thanked him for his service. Carlos Guerrero is the Foundation's new trustee liaison. Eric Harnish has been appointed as an additional Administrator from the Valencia Campus, in accordance with the bylaws.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**2.1 Comments by Members of the Audience NOT on the Agenda**

**Gary Horton**

There were no comments made by members of the audience not on the agenda

**3. GUEST SPEAKER**

**3.1 Dr. Jai-Yi Cheng-Levine**

**Gary Horton**

Dr. Cheng-Levine presented to the board regarding a request for funding for refugee students. Dr. Cheng-Levine's International Services & Programs attract new students and raise awareness of community colleges among international and refugee populations. Non-credit classes are offered, and in 2022, she reached 167 refugees by bringing English instruction directly to their hotel. To qualify for federal financial aid, a person needs a green card, and government assistance covers only basic needs. Refugees in this country must go through a long process to become citizens, delaying their ability to qualify for federal financial aid. Dr. Cheng-Levine asked for \$8,000 to purchase 20 laptops, which will significantly benefit students who are here as refugees. She requested that a Foundation account be created to facilitate laptop purchases, as another group of 40 students is expected this fall. The laptops that will be purchased cost approximately \$300.00 each and have a two-year lifespan. One laptop will be provided to each qualifying family in order to assist them in accessing non-credit and credit classes. The Foundation will email a donation link, and Gary Horton encouraged recipients to share it with friends and family. Scott Schauer asked about the availability of Foundation funds, however because of the limitations on certain funds that could be used for this sort of request, that is not an option at this time.

**4. INSTALLATION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

**4.1 Installation of New Board Members**

**Shawna Mann**

Trustee Carlos Guerrero installed four nominated and Ex Officio members into the Foundation Board of Directors: Eric Harnish, Jasmine Ruys, Karina Momary, and Cindy Stephens.

**5. INFORMATION AND ITEMS APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**5.1 Approval of Financial Statements as of November 30, 2025**

**Jason Hinkle**

Jason Hinkle presented the Foundation's financial statements. As of November 30, revenues are tracking on target. with higher expenses due to front-loaded contractual and administrative costs. =. The golf tournament raised \$143,000 and was a success. Our fund and cash balances remain healthy, and we expect to meet our budget.

William Harwood suggested allocating funds to higher-yield investments, and Jason Hinkle mentioned reviewing policies first. Desiree Dodd encouraged William to join the Finance Committee; Shawna Mann agreed to send William Harwood the Foundation's investment policy. William noted challenges accessing board documents and requested that they be uploaded to the Foundation's website. Desiree Dodd reviewed the Foundation's fundraising report and recognized recent \$10,000 donors.

**5.2 Remove Monica Lee Copeland from Foundation Credit Card**

**Desiree Dodd**

Desiree Dodd presented the above listed change to the Foundation credit card.

**5.3 Professional Service Agreements** **Desiree Dodd**

- Grey Rainbow, LLC – Guest Lecturer – Graphic & Multimedia Design - \$750.00 (From Kevin Jenkins Memorial Fund)

Desiree Dodd presented the professional service agreements above.

**5.3 Discussion Regarding Off-Campus Housing Options** **Scott Schauer**

Scott Schauer, Matt Crater, and Ted Iacenda discussed potential off-campus housing initiatives with board members. There is substantial student demand for housing, but regulatory requirements and high local rents pose significant challenges. Families regularly inquire about housing during enrollment, and many students are ineligible for aid due to parental income. The board discussed student housing insecurity, reviewed federal aid models, and confirmed that all services must comply with the bylaws to ensure equal access. Jasmine Ruys clarified that the recent housing grant was returned because of operational costs and eligibility restrictions. Suggestions included forming a committee to assess building costs, exploring partnerships with local apartments, and revisiting the topic after the new President is hired. Gary Horton requested that this discussion be formally recorded.

**6. APPROVAL**

**6.1 Professional Service Agreement** **Desiree Dodd**

- Kristen Jarabek – Creation of Case Brochure - \$1,985

Desiree Dodd requested a motion to approve the professional service agreements above

<b>Motion to Approve:</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Vote - Passed:</b>
Jeremy Patrich	Joyce Carson	21 Yes
		0 No
		0 Abstention

**6.2 Resolution to Endow Cusumano Scholarship Fund** **Desiree Dodd**

Desiree Dodd requested a motion to endow the Cusumano Family and Friends Endowed Culinary Arts Scholarship Fund. The process would transfer \$173,225 from Fund 84 to Fund 86. Any new donations to the Diana L. Cusumano iCUE Scholarship Fund will be deposited directly into Fund 86 to help increase the corpus of the Cusumano Family and Friends Endowed Culinary Arts Scholarship.

<b>Motion to Approve:</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Vote - Passed:</b>
Joyce Carson	Randy Moberg	21 Yes
		0 No
		0 Abstention

**7. REPORTS**

**7.1 Committee Reports** **Dawn Abasta**

Dawn Abasta presented the Silver Spur Committee report. She shared that Ed Masterson was nominated for Silver Spur, which is scheduled for May 30. Pricing will remain unchanged from last year, with an increase in advertising costs. Special rates will be offered for board and 501(c)(3) sponsorships. The venue is reserved, and the theme is Classic Hollywood. Last year’s honoree, Marlee Lauffer, has offered to serve as emcee. There were no other committee reports.

**7.1 President’s Report** **Jasmine Ruys**

Jamine Ruys presented College updates to the board. She explained that alongside other board members, she visited the Capitol last weekend and discussed funding, deferred maintenance, and COLA for specific funds. She also shared that Board Room 301 has been

renovated. She thanked our guest speakers and affirmed her belief that hearing from students strengthens our message. Campus tours will be scheduled to showcase new facilities and classes in OT, PT, and Culinary. Multiple tour dates will be available. Board member Jeremy Patrich the facilities and new student benches.

**8. ADJOURNMENT AND UPCOMING DATES**

- |            |   |                    |
|------------|---|--------------------|
| <b>8.1</b> | <b>Next Full Board Meeting – Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 5:30 PM</b>              | <b>Gary Horton</b> |
| <b>8.2</b> | <b>Joint Meeting with Board of Trustees – Wednesday, May 25, 2026, at 4:00 PM</b> | <b>Gary Horton</b> |
| <b>8.3</b> | <b>Adjournment and Announcement</b>   | <b>Gary Horton</b> |

Desiree Dodd announced the Diana and Gary Cusumano Institute for Culinary Arts Building Ribbon Cutting and Naming Ceremony will take place on April 16th. She invited all Board members to attend and shared a formal invite will be sent out in the coming weeks. Gary Horton adjourned the meeting at 6:44 pm.