



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

From left, Aaron Granados, Harlin Aguilar and Abraham Rojas tighten the cam shafts on an engine during a class Sept. 12 inside the Auto Technology facility at Santa Ana College.

NEW TRACK

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN AUTO TECH WILL HELP FILL WORKFORCE NEED

Program planned to start in fall 2026

By **Jenelyn Russo**
contributing writer

Santa Ana College is introducing a new bachelor's degree in automotive technology. Available to students beginning in the fall 2026, the automotive technology bachelor's degree is the third to be offered at the college, joining SAC's occupational studies and paralegal bachelor's degree programs.

This new pathway will be in addition to SAC's associate degree in automotive technology and the many automotive certificates currently offered, all within the school's Human Services

and Technology Division.

To gain a better understanding of workforce development in this high-demand field, SAC assembled an advisory committee comprising professionals from numerous auto manufacturers and dealerships based in Southern California.

The feedback SAC received from this committee was insightful. While dealership service managers did not express a stated need for workers to have a bachelor's degree, manufacturer representatives did.

SAC associate professor of Automotive Technology David Roper, who also serves as the chair of Automotive &

Diesel-Electric Transportation Technology, began collecting labor market data from the committee to develop the degree program application.

"I put together (an outline) to meet with them ... and get their opinions on a possible bachelor's degree that is more focused on manufacturers and getting a degree that can help students eventually work for the manufacturer," Roper said.

After nearly 18 months of data collection from local auto manufacturers such as General Motors (Glendale), Ford (La Mirada), Mercedes (Long Beach) and Hyundai (Fountain Valley), Roper submitted the bachelor's degree

application in January of this year and received approval over the summer.

"The process was very strategic," said Larisa Sergeyeva, SAC dean of Human Services and Technology. "If we develop something, we want to make sure that it will provide a brighter future for our students."

Bachelor's degrees at community colleges function as a 2 + 2 pathway, where students must first earn an associate degree before they are accepted into the bachelor's program.

SAC's automotive technology associate degree focuses on technical courses with hands-on learning in a lab setting.

AUTO » PAGE 3



RSCCD Chancellor Marvin Martinez

PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

THE FUTURE

5 questions with district Chancellor Marvin Martinez

Continued opportunities, facility upgrades planned

By **Jennifer Karmarkar**
contributing writer

Marvin Martinez is the chancellor of Rancho Santiago Community College District, which serves Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College. The Register sat down with him to learn about his vision for the district.

To what do you attribute the growth of RSCCD, which has become the number one district in California for adult and continuing education, serving over 106,000 students last year?

RSCCD's growth results from our relentless focus on providing high-quality, accessible education tailored to the needs of our community. Becoming the number one district in California for Adult and Continuing Education FTES

with only two colleges directly reflects the hard work of our faculty, staff and administrators. We've grown by serving over 106,000 students, including 25,000 additional individuals we reached during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our growth is not just about numbers — it's about transforming lives, creating opportunities and ensuring our students thrive in an ever-evolving economy. The success of our students is our success, and this growth speaks to our community's trust in RSCCD.

How has the increase in students impacted resources and facilities?

The significant increase in enrollment, now exceeding 106,000 students, has pushed our facilities to their limits. Both Santa Ana College and San-

CHANCELLOR » PAGE 5

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ACADEMICS

New arts co-chair looking to expand the program

Music major degree her main goal

By Nicole Gregory
contributing writer

Eleanor Núñez, the new co-chair of the Performing Arts Department, has ambitious goals for the Santiago Canyon College music department this year.

“My big goal is to get SCC to offer a music major degree for our incoming students, which we currently don’t offer,” said Núñez, who collaborates with co-chair Alex Taber, an economics professor, composer and musician. “Up until this point, there hasn’t been what is called the AAT, or the associate of arts degree for transfer.”

SCC’s Performing Arts Department comprises music, dance and theater programs, of which music is the most comprehensive.

Students who want to be music majors at four-year universities must take core requirement classes to prepare for those upper-division courses, Núñez explained. “About half of the requirements are already provided here at SCC, but the ones that I am looking to add are music theory and musicianship.”

If plans go as she hopes, SCC will offer these critical new classes as early as the spring or fall of 2025. “I’m ambitious,” she said. “I like to get things moving as quickly as possible.”

Núñez is a proponent of the music degree. “It’s a very fun degree. It’s hard, I won’t lie. It is challenging to be a music major,” she said. “It requires a lot of discipline; it requires a lot of patience. But, of course, I think it’s very rewarding. That’s why I was a music major and why I do this now and why I want to offer this opportunity to more students so that we can have this here at SCC.”

In addition to her SCC department duties, Núñez teaches a course in the history of rock music. “I am young, and I do enjoy nonclassical genres of music,” she said. “I’m a big rock ‘n’ roll fan. There are components of pop and



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Eleanor Núñez is the new co-chair of the Santiago Canyon College Performing Arts Department.

jazz and country embedded within the course as well, which are all genres that I very much enjoy.”

Núñez is a classical pianist and conductor and earned her bachelor’s degree in music and a master’s degree in wind ensemble conducting from Cal State Fullerton. She served as the symphony orchestra director at Irvine Valley College, where she also taught piano.

On weekends she works at the prestigious Colburn School in downtown Los Angeles as the director of band, orchestras and conducting for an extracurricular pre-college program.

For nearly 14 years, SCC’s Performing Arts Department has been chaired by the renowned Binh Vu, who is preparing to retire.

“I am coming in to continue the leg-

acy of Dr. Vu,” said Núñez, adding she is grateful she can rely on him as a resource before he leaves. “I’ve had a million questions, and he has been so helpful in providing answers and connecting me with different folks of the community, and staff and faculty here at the college.”

Several concerts are planned for the school year, including one on Nov. 7 that will showcase compositions written by alumnus Victor Gutierrez, who earned his bachelor’s degree in music at Cal State Fullerton and recently finished his master’s at New York University.

Roberto Velazquez, recipient of the 2024 SCC Performing Arts Community Partner Award, will also be honored for his service.


Students from the Canyon High School Orchestra, directed by Michael Whang, and El Rancho Charter Middle School Orchestra, directed by Catherine Olsen, will perform classical orchestral works. “They are literally down the street from us — we’re really excited to have them be a part of this program,” Núñez said.

Just a few days before the concert, on Nov. 5, a bond measure will be on the ballot for financing much-needed new buildings on SCC’s campus. Núñez sees that one day soon a new performing arts building will be needed — concerts are typically held in the library or the gym.

“We don’t have a space dedicated for our performing arts students to study music,” she said. “We need a music facility with practice rooms and large ensemble spaces.”

Spaces suited for dancers are also needed. “We want to open dance studios as well so that dancers have the correct type of wood floor, and for ballet classes, we’ll need barres and mirrors. We need a larger stage that will accommodate large-scale theater productions.”

Núñez looks forward to future performances that combine music, dance and theater. “We’d love to collaborate in a large-scale project like a musical sometime in the future. My understanding is that this has not happened at SCC — yet!”



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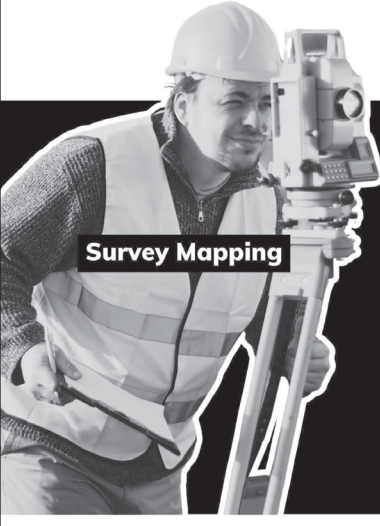
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JEANNIE G. KIM

Cancer journey affirms president's mission in higher education

College enhancing medical education

By Jenelyn Russo
contributing writer

When Santiago Canyon College President Jeannie G. Kim went in for her COVID-postponed routine mammogram in December 2021, the results launched her into an unexpected fight for her life. It was a breast cancer treatment journey that not only reaffirmed her deep appreciation for Orange County's health care community but also renewed her passion for providing accessible pathways for students into the medical professions.

Biopsy testing in January 2022 revealed that Kim was BRCA2 positive and had a Stage 3 aggressive form of breast cancer, a discovery that prompted neoadjuvant chemotherapy, a course of treatment used to shrink the tumor prior to surgery. Her diagnosis, at age 55, was not the first time cancer had affected her family. Her father died from pancreatic cancer at the same age, one of several family members who have battled the disease.

Not one to back down from a fight, Kim began chemotherapy treatment in spring 2022 at Hoag Hospital, first with anthracycline followed by Taxol. But after just one dose of the Taxol, her body developed violent side effects. She was immediately admitted to the hospital with excruciating pain, a high fever and a rapid onset of sepsis.

"I found myself in the ICU on Mother's Day of 2022, fighting for my life," Kim said. "I could not breathe, my lungs were shutting down and the doctors didn't know why this was happening."

By Mother's Day night, Kim could no longer breathe on her own. The medical team, which included her oncologist, a pulmonologist, a cardiologist and a number of specialists and internists, had never seen a case like it. Time was not on her side, and the doctors gave her 48 hours to live.

Kim contacted her brother, and with a DNR and end-of-life care in place, he took over his sister's medical decision-



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Jeannie G. Kim, SCC president

making. Kim also has a nonverbal, special needs adult son, as well as two daughters who were away at college at the time. One was completing her final exams at UC Santa Cruz and the other was preparing to graduate from the University of Minnesota.

Monday came and Kim was on six broad-spectrum antibiotics simultaneously, in addition to fentanyl and morphine for her fever and uncontrolled pain. Her daughters flew in from college to be by her side and were the only two allowed in the room due to COVID-19 protocols.

Based on input from an anesthesiologist friend, Kim believed that her severe symptoms were being caused by a very rare allergy to Taxol, a reaction that only occurs in 0.5% of the population that receives the drug. The treatment called for high doses of steroids, a risky plan given that the doctors weren't sure of the source of her lung infection.

That evening, Kim experienced something she can only describe as a spiritual event during which she could feel God's power healing her in the midst of a battle between life and death.

"I had some very strange dreams, and I felt God's hand actually healing me," Kim said. "I felt this power where his hand was over my lungs, and I could feel the energy coming through. ... It was a very strange kind of experience. I could



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Santiago Canyon College President Jeannie G. Kim, center, with faculty at the 2024 graduation ceremony

feel the powers fighting ... and the next day, I started to recover."

With only a 50/50 chance of success, the doctors started Kim on the steroid treatment on Tuesday morning, and she began to make a miraculous recovery. After 10 days in the hospital, she was released, and on June 1, 2022, she had a double mastectomy plus reconstruction surgery. Today, she is two years cancer-free.

Kim approached her cancer treatment journey with the attitude that she wasn't going to let it win, and as such, she spent much of 2022 not only fighting for her life but also pursuing a new position in higher education. In January 2023, she took over as president at SCC, and her focus on providing medical occupation pathways comes not just from wanting to be of service but from personal experience. She feels SCC is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for those who are seeking to be a part of the health profession, and if voters approve a bond measure that is on

the ballot this November, the college has plans to build new facilities that support this mission.

"Orange is a place where hope continues because of the care that the medical community provides, and I personally experienced that," Kim said. "And so, while I believe in miracles, God uses people in order to be able to make some of these miracles come to complete fruition."

Kim also credits the community support that came alongside her during her cancer fight. She, along with Rancho Santiago Community College District Trustee John Hanna's wife Cynthia, who herself is a breast cancer survivor, will walk with SCC's soccer team in the Susan G. Komen 2024 More Than Pink Walk this month.

"It gives me comfort in knowing that our students care in that manner," Kim said. "They're not just getting academically educated. They are being educated from the heart via their student experiences by experiencing life together."



On September 24, 2023, the Santiago Canyon College Women's Soccer team, Jeannie Kim and Cynthia Hanna participated in the Susan G. Komen More than Pink Walk in Newport Beach. Pictured are Kim and Hanna, left, and the team, right.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Auto

FROM PAGE 1

Students learn everything from how to change brakes to how to rebuild an engine transmission, with all classes following the standards set by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, an independent professional certification group within the automotive service and repair industry.

The next task for Roper and his team is to develop and receive approval on the program curriculum, which Roper has outlined in three parts.

The pathway's 300-level technical courses will follow Automotive Service Excellence's advanced standards and will include engineering principles and diagnostic training. In the 400-level lecture-style courses, students will be exposed to topics such as management, supply chain and ethics, providing them with a broader understanding of what fields they can pursue after degree completion.

The degree plan will also be augmented with three general education courses that will have an auto technology emphasis in areas such as communications, environmental science and computer applications.

"A big reason for the program is to provide an opportunity for the students to think outside of the box," Roper

said. "When you get in that technician mindset ... you don't really think of what else is out there. So this program is designed to show them what else is out there and to guide them."

Roper envisions starting in fall 2026 with a cohort of approximately 25-30 students. SAC's automotive programs already have a strong reputation in the industry and are highly impacted, with as many as 200 students on waitlists for courses each term.

The program currently has five full-time faculty and hopes to add a sixth. If voters approve a bond measure that is on the ballot this November, the college plans to expand its facilities to support the additional course offerings.

"Santa Ana College is proud to be the home of three bachelor's programs, more than any other community college in the state of California," said Jeff Lamb, vice president of Academic Affairs at SAC. "Our upcoming bond, if passed by the voters, will provide us with the resources to build a state-of-the-art home for the new bachelor's in automotive technology."

Another aspect of the new program that will be attractive to students is the affordability of the degree. With upper-division courses currently priced at \$130 per unit, the automotive technology bachelor's degree can be completed for less than \$8,000, a price tag that may open the door for those who never envisioned higher education as a



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Josceline Cortez removes valve springs during a class inside the Auto Technology facility at Santa Ana College.

feasible path.

"We are looking at the students potentially who will start in noncredit adult education, transitioning into the automotive pathway to an automotive

AA degree, and then to a bachelor's degree," Sergeyeva said. "That would be a true example of what community college is really all about. It's creating that opportunity."

OUTREACH

Upward Bound gives underrepresented students a boost

Help in math, science opens door to college

By Lou Ponsi
contributing writer

Santiago Canyon College has consistently earned high rankings for its standing as a Hispanic-serving institution, particularly for its emphasis on educating first-generation and low-income students.

Niche.com, a website ranking U.S. schools at all levels on a variety of criteria, lists SCC as the No.1 HSI in Orange County, No. 7 in California and No.8 in the nation.

In an open letter to the SCC community, written in September, SCC President Jeannie Kim wrote that the rankings demonstrate the college's "intentional focus and sustained effort to create a campus climate where students from underrepresented groups can thrive."

One key initiative that has contributed to the high marks is SCC's Upward Bound Math & Science program, which serves first-generation and low-income Hispanic students interested in pursuing a college major, degree or career in STEM — science, technology, engineering and math.

Funded by a \$3 million STEM grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Upward Bound Math & Science program develops and improves academic skills, helping students graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary education and explore career choices.

The program, which is provided at no charge, aims to increase the rate at which participating students complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from college.

Upward Bound Math & Science serves students at Orange and El Modena high schools, both identified as having the greatest need, said Eddie Rocha, director of special programs at SCC.

Students in the program can receive tutoring in English, composition, math and science.

The program also includes academic review and mentoring sessions, PSAT/ACT/SAT preparation workshops, STEM Career Exploration and panels featuring STEM professionals.

"We are looking to get students into a four-year (college) and try to get them to reach that level," Rocha said.

Upward Bound Math & Science also includes field trips to colleges and universities and a seven-week summer residential program in which participants take two math-support courses and an English-support course through a non-credit branch.

Students in the college-credit branch take a college course during the summer, Rocha said.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

The Santiago Canyon Upward Bound Math & Science program serves first-generation and low-income Hispanic students interested in pursuing a college major, degree or career in STEM.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Upward Bound Math & Science works with Orange Unified School District high schools Orange and El Modena and has resumed its tutoring services and college and career support.

This past summer, 23 students lived in a dorm four days a week at Whittier College while taking a college sociology course with a college professor.

Every student successfully completed the course, Rocha said.

"They're getting a preview of the in-

tensity of just what it is to be a college student," he said.

Because the summer program is challenging, some students who were getting Cs and Ds become A-B students, said Tara Ontiveros, student services specialist for the Upward Bound Math

& Science program at Orange High School.

"So, their GPA will go from maybe a 2.0 to a 3.0 after a full year of work, once the summer is over," she said.

Ontiveros works directly with the students on-site, hosts orientation presentations and interacts with parents.

"During my appointments with the students, I talk about their grades, their career goals, their current goals and what it is that they need from me to accomplish that goal," Ontiveros said. "I work with them making sure they're communicating with the right people to ensure that their journey is the journey that they're looking for, and the right one for them."

Financial aid workshops, college-planning and transition workshops, parent education, Science Saturdays, college tours, Dual Enrollment and cultural activities are also included in the Upward Bound program.

Rocha also oversees SCC's College Assistance Migrant Program known as CAMP, which serves students from families with migrant and seasonal farm-working backgrounds.

"It's a very specific population that has certain needs, and we're stationed at Santiago Canyon College to service those families as well."

NO. 4 STATEWIDE

District leads OC in number of full-time equivalent students

RSCCD Communications

The Rancho Santiago Community College District has solidified its position as the top community college district in Orange County for the 2023-2024 academic year, according to the latest Full-Time Equivalent Student Summary Report by Data Mart. RSCCD recorded a remarkable total of 35,852.01 FTES, making it the leading district in the county and placing it fourth statewide. This significant achievement underscores RSCCD's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality education to its students.

An FTES is a critical metric in California's community college system, representing 525 hours of student instruction. The report's findings are based on a comprehensive analysis of instructional hours accumulated during the Spring 2024 semester. RSCCD's FTES figure includes both credit and non-credit students, with 21,636.91 credit FTES and 14,215.09 noncredit FTES. This distinction highlights the district's ability to cater to a diverse student population, offering a wide range of educational opportunities.

As a two-college district with Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College, RSCCD ranks just behind the Los Angeles Community College District, Los Rios Community College District, and San Diego Community College District—all of which are multicollge districts with greater resources and larger student populations. This ranking highlights RSCCD's efficiency and effectiveness in maximizing its resources to benefit its students, a key objective of the district's Strategic Directives.

RSCCD's Strategic Directives are a cornerstone of the district's strategy, guiding its educational offerings, facilities, and student services. They emphasize innovation, inclusivity, and the development of programs that meet the evolving needs of the community. The district's ability to lead in FTES is a testament to the successful implementation of these directives, prioritizing student success, academic excellence, and workforce readiness.

"This accomplishment is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty, staff, and administra-

RSCCD RANKED AMONG TOP 5

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICTS IN CALIFORNIA

District	Total FTES	Credit	Non-Credit
Los Angeles CCD	Total: 83,518.70	77,873.48	5,645.22
Los Rios CCD	Total: 49,355.19	49,315.30	39.88
San Diego CCD	Total: 44,920.41	34,946.90	9,973.51
Rancho Santiago CCD	Total: 35,852.01	21,636.91	14,215.09
Mt. SAC	Total: 34,810.29	25,751.72	9,058.57

Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Full Time Equivalent Student (FTES*) Summary Report

Report by District Ranking by Total FTES 2023-2024

rsccd.edu

tion at Santiago Canyon College and Santa Ana College," said Marvin Martinez, chancellor of RSCCD. "Our board of trustees has been instrumental in directing our efforts, ensuring that our mission to provide a comprehensive and flexible education is fulfilled.

Being recognized as the top district in Orange County and among the top in the state affirms our commitment to this mission and our long-term strategic goals."

With the start of a new school year, RSCCD remains focused on expanding

educational opportunities, enhancing student services, and ensuring its facilities support a dynamic learning environment. The district's commitment to its mission and strategic vision positions it as an education leader within Orange County and the state.

DIVERSITY

SCC will establish a Latinx Center with Title V grant funds

Support, referrals to resources offered

By Lou Ponsi
contributing writer

Santiago Canyon College continues to implement strategies to increase enrollment, completion and transfer rates for Hispanic students, especially those from low-income backgrounds.

Hispanic students make up nearly 60% of the student population at SCC, with 40% of those Hispanic students falling in the low-income demographic.

To reach its goal, SCC is establishing a Latinx Center, which provides an array of services to Hispanic students.

The center is aptly named Nuestro Lugar, or Our Place, and will offer counseling, peer mentorship and support, case management, advising and referrals to campus resources.

Funding for the project is coming from a five-year, \$3 million Title V grant, a U.S. Department of Education initiative that enables Hispanic-serving institutions to “assist and expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanic students.”

An abstract, or summary of how SCC will use Title V funds, that was submitted to the Department of Education includes increasing Hispanic students’ sense of belonging by 30%.

Nuestro Lugar is expected to improve Hispanic students’ “persistence rate,” defined as the student’s ability to continue on to the next semester, by 10% and Increase Hispanic students’ completion and transfer rates by 15% by the end of the project.

Officials say Nuestro Lugar will help to create a campus where Hispanic students and families feel like they belong.

In an open letter to the SCC community, SCC President Jeannie G. Kim reiterated the college’s commitment to “cultivating a sense of belonging — building an environment through teaching, learning and services that respects and values multiple cultural and racial experiences and perspectives.”

Other Title V initiatives involve creating bilingual materials and providing



Yuri Betancourt director, Special Programs, Title V/HSI Grant

PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

bilingual outreach and orientation for students and their parents.

Nuestro Lugar also calls for the creation of “artwork on campus that reflects Hispanic heritage, peoples and cultures,” as stated in the abstract.

The new center also aims to increase financial-aid awards to Hispanic students by 5% every year.

The Nuestro Lugar center shares a building with the Black Legacy Achievement Center of Knowledge, known commonly as B.L.A.C.K.

Yuri Betancourt, director of special programs at SCC, said sharing a space with B.L.A.C.K. could be the beginning of what she hopes will be a set of affinity centers.

An affinity group is a designated safe space for people with a shared identity

or experience based on gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality and other criteria.

“I like the idea of all the affinity centers occupying the same space for resources,” Betancourt said. “So, maybe we can have one for Pride Center, too, or DocuScholars, or the Asian Student Youth Center. All those areas having the same sorts of resources for students who identify as such, but then also having a shared lounge space. That’s how I envision it.”

In addition to being used for renovation or construction of campus buildings, Title V funds can be used to purchase science and lab equipment, faculty development, establish tutoring and counseling programs and student support services.

SCC also plans to use Title V grant funding to establish a “Virtual Student Union” to enable online-only students to connect with support services.

Establishing an alumni association with a list of donors is another priority.

In 2011, SCC used a Title V grant to establish the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, which serves as a resource for administrators, faculty and staff by using data to assess the college’s needs and then develop programs to foster student learning and achievement.

The office’s mission statement reads:

“The office supports the college culture of data-informed decision-making by facilitating meaningful understanding of data and results related to outcomes.”

NICHE.COM RATING

Santiago Canyon College ranked top community college in county

RSCCD Communications

Citing a rigorous analysis of data points, including academic quality, student and faculty achievement, and post-graduate earnings, Niche.com, an independent college ranking higher education research outlet, ranked Santiago Canyon College the number one college in Orange County, the eighth-best community college among 118 in California and the 16th-best community college among 755 surveyed in America in its recently released 2025 list.

The 2025 Niche.com rankings were a significant increase from the previous year, when SCC was ranked 51st in the nation and 16th in California among its peer colleges. The rankings were compiled with an emphasis on academic quality, diversity, quality of instruction and student life using the most recent provisional data available from multiple sources including the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System through the National Center for Education Statistics and the Office of Post-Secondary Education through the U.S. Department of Education.

“The rankings amongst community colleges in the nation and state, as well as in comparison to our peers in Orange County serve as a confirming snapshot of the passion and commitment of our students, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators working in unison to provide the best in service and academics,” said SCC President Jeannie G. Kim. “As our motto says, what happens at SCC matters as we continue to serve our community members who seek to take courses and complete degrees and certifications for upward economic and job mobility; work with industries such as healthcare to meet regional workforce development needs; as well as those looking for direct transfer pathways to four-year institutions such as UCLA, UCI, USC, Stanford, Harvard, CSUF and so many others.”



Students pose with the school's Hawk mascot on campus.

PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Santiago Canyon College welcomed a new class of students on the first day of fall semester Aug. 19.



Chancellor

FROM PAGE 1

tiago Canyon College are operating at full capacity, and our infrastructure is struggling to meet the demands of this growth. Many of our buildings are aging, and our technology needs upgrades to keep pace with modern educational standards. Overcrowding in classrooms, outdated computer systems, and limited lab space are just some of the challenges we face. While this growth is a positive reflection of our impact, it also highlights the urgent need to expand and update our facilities to ensure that every student has access to the learning environments they deserve.

How is RSCCD preparing for the demographic shift in

Orange County, where 50% of the population will be 40 or over by 2032, while continuing to serve traditional students?

We are proactively preparing for this demographic shift by expanding programs serving traditional and nontraditional students. As the population ages, there will be a growing need for educational opportunities tailored to mid-career professionals and older adults looking to reskill or advance in their careers. At the same time, we continue to support younger, traditional students by offering programs that prepare them for the workforce or further education. Our bachelor’s degree programs in Occupational Studies, Paralegal Studies and Automotive Technology are examples of how we’re addressing the needs of a diverse student body and ensuring that all students are prepared for success in a changing economy.

What is RSCCD doing to address the needs of veterans and first responders?

RSCCD is deeply committed to supporting veterans and first responders. We have established Veterans Resource Centers at our colleges to provide these individuals with the specialized services they need to transition into civilian careers, including academic advising, mental health counseling and job placement services. We also offer training programs tailored to the needs of first responders, such as law enforcement, firefighting and emergency medical services. With Measure G (which would provide locally-controlled funding to complete upgrades to aging schools), we will be able to invest in even better facilities and resources, ensuring veterans and first responders continue to receive top-tier training and support in their educational journeys.

What could RSCCD do if it had more resources?

With additional resources, RSCCD could significantly enhance our educational offerings and facilities. We would renovate aging buildings, improve accessibility for disabled students and relieve overcrowded classrooms by constructing new facilities. Furthermore, we could expand our programs to better prepare students for high-wage, high-demand careers in fields like health care, cybersecurity and green technologies. Investing in these upgrades would directly impact the quality of education we provide, ensuring that our students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow and that our community benefits from a stronger, more educated workforce. Measure G is not just an investment in our colleges; it’s an investment in the future prosperity of our entire community.

RATINGS

Santa Ana College ranks No. 2 statewide in FTES

RSCCD Communications

Santa Ana College has achieved a remarkable milestone in the 2023-24 academic year, ranking second statewide for noncredit full-time equivalent students and second overall for total FTES, according to a recent California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Data Mart report. This recognition highlights SAC's commitment to providing accessible, quality education to diverse populations, ranging from workforce development to adult learners and high school students.

SAC has continually expanded its reach through programs that cater to various educational needs and flexible learning opportunities for students. Key initiatives such as workforce training, dual enrollment, adult education, and partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and businesses have driven this growth.

President Annebelle Nery credits SAC's rise in both credit and noncredit FTES to a well-rounded and inclusive educational strategy. "Our success is deeply rooted in our emphasis on workforce training and adult education, which meet the needs of the community," said Nery. "Our programs are designed to provide practical skills that immediately translate into employment opportunities for our students, which is critical in today's economy."

SAC's workforce training programs offering industry-specific certifications and degrees attract not just traditional students but also adult learners seeking to reskill or upskill in a competitive job environment. The college's success in attracting adult learners, particularly in noncredit programs, has significantly contributed to its top ranking, according to Nery.

"We've seen a steady increase in adult learners enrolling in our noncredit programs, which offer a flexible, low-cost entry point to higher education and workforce development," Nery said. "These programs empower individuals to improve their skills, making them more competitive in the labor market and enhancing their overall economic stability."

SAC's innovative approach to dual enrollment programs has also played a key role in its growth. These programs allow high school students to earn college credit while completing their high school education, accelerating their path to a degree or certificate.

"Our dual enrollment programs are



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Santa Ana College graduates smile for the camera during the June 7 commencement ceremony.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
Students take advantage of informational booths during the Santa Ana College Career Fair in April.

making a profound impact on high school students, especially those who may not have otherwise considered college," said Nery. "By offering them a head start on their college education, we are opening doors to new opportunities and helping them realize their full potential."

The expansion of partnerships with public agencies, nonprofits, and businesses also has had an impact.

"SAC is proud of the partnerships we've built across different sectors," Nery said. "These relationships have enabled us to develop programs that directly benefit our community, providing education that leads to well-paying jobs and fulfilling careers."

Partnerships with healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, and local government have resulted in tailored training programs that align with industry standards and job market demands.

Nery emphasized the importance of providing access to education and the flexibility to meet students' diverse needs. "These rankings reflect that we are fulfilling our mission to provide access to higher education for all," she said. "We are committed to offering flexible learning options that enable students to complete their educational goals, whether they are pursuing a degree, transferring to a four-year university, or acquiring skills for immediate employment."

SAC has invested in online and hybrid learning, enabling students to pursue their education while balancing work, family, and other responsibilities. This flexibility has been instrumental in attracting a wider range of students, contributing to the college's growing FTES.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS
SAC students practice on a medical dummy during EMT training classes.



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