

# HORIZON

SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Newsletter from the Office of the Chancellor

Issue No. 8



SOCCCD leaders join the O.C. Board of Supervisors for a presentation ceremony for Community College Awareness Month.

## SOCCCD Leaders Spread Community College Awareness Throughout O.C.

City Council Chambers, Halls of Administration, and Civic Centers throughout Orange County served as the backdrop for Community College Awareness Month in April – as SOCCCD worked to spread awareness about the positive impact of our colleges.

Several city councils and the county Board of Supervisors passed proclamations deeming April “Community College Awareness Month.” Each proclamation informed residents of our service area, about the 400 degrees and certificates offered, the large local economic impact, and the great diversity of our student population.

Most memorable were the personal anecdotes from mayors, council members, and city staff on their positive experiences as students, or parents of students, who attended Irvine Valley College

or Saddleback College.

Serving nearly 50,000 students, Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College are essential resources for the county’s residents and its economic growth.

Our colleges train students to be competitive in today’s demanding workforce, providing them with skills needed to obtain higher-wage jobs and supply fast-growing industries with skilled labor.

Spreading awareness about how community colleges bring higher education within reach does not end in April. SOCCCD will continue to inform the public about the California Community Colleges’ open admissions, low enrollment fees, financial assistance, academic and career guidance, outstanding teachers, and support services for students.

# In Gratitude and With a Focus on the Future

**O**n April 27, 2023, the district participated in a historic event in hosting an inaugural investiture in my honor and I am filled with gratitude to the SOCCCD board of trustees, students, faculty and staff.

It was a beautiful day to gather as community members joined us to reflect and, more importantly, to look forward to the days ahead.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all of the speakers who had kind and inspirational messages about their hopes for our District. I am also grateful for the efforts of those involved in planning the Investiture ceremony.

I reported on my 100 Days of Listening in my investiture speech, outlining key observations and possibilities for future initiatives. I have aimed to understand our challenges and explore ways to collaboratively develop strategies focused on the priorities that will move us forward.

Across district disciplines, governance groups, and areas of focus, five major themes were illuminated during my listening tour:

**#1: We must rethink the post-pandemic future of our colleges.**

The COVID-19 pandemic led to unprecedented disruptions district-wide and revealed disparities that exist for students, staff, and faculty. Through student-centered approaches to address academic and non-academic needs, we have an opportunity to establish a new normal with equitable outcomes.

**#2: We can live our values by strengthening diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.**

Diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility are already clear values



**Board President Jemal and Chancellor Barnes at the Investiture Ceremony.**

in the SOCCCD. Our student bodies at both colleges are very diverse — an incredible strength for the District. While there are numerous examples of DEIA practices and policies in place, there is more that we can do to eradicate equity gaps.

**#3: To best prepare our students for the future, we must continue to advance excellence and innovation.**

Our society is ever-changing, as is each generation of students. As such, we must embrace change and continuous improvement. A strength of our district is that we are not afraid of employing new practices to address the unique needs of our diverse student population.

**#4: The people of SOCCCD, our greatest strength.**

When I asked about our greatest strength, unequivocally I heard “it’s all about the people.” It was clear to me from day one that our colleges and district have dedicated and caring employees. Indeed, people are SOCCCD’s greatest asset and we have an opportunity to strengthen the way in which they feel valued.

**#5: We are in this together.**

I have quickly learned that our community is tight knit and comprised of a unique culture and environment. We have strong relationships with external partners, but we also have opportunities to strengthen relationships with K-12 districts, community organizations, and elected leaders.

I am excited to embark on the work to move our district forward through a shared vision of collaboration, fueled by information and empathy for overall success.

I am honored to be your chancellor, and I am confident in our ability to serve our students well, to teach and inspire them to be the leaders our world needs, and to keep creating room for everyone who wants to benefit from an exceptional education.

*Julianne Barnes*







To learn more, please click on:

- **Team Banner** web page
- **Team Banner** Sharepoint page

# Go for the Gold, Team Banner!

**A**s the 2024 Olympic Games draw closer, we are thrilled to launch our very own internal campaign, for the Banner project called “Team Banner,” aimed at embracing the spirit of the Olympics and fostering a sense of teamwork, excellence, and inspiration among all of us.

The Olympic Games have always symbolized unity, perseverance, and the pursuit of greatness. They bring together athletes from diverse backgrounds, celebrating their incredible achievements and showcasing the power of dedication and collaboration. Similarly, we believe that by channeling the essence of the Olympics within our organization, we can achieve extraordinary things together. With the Team Banner campaign, we aim to:

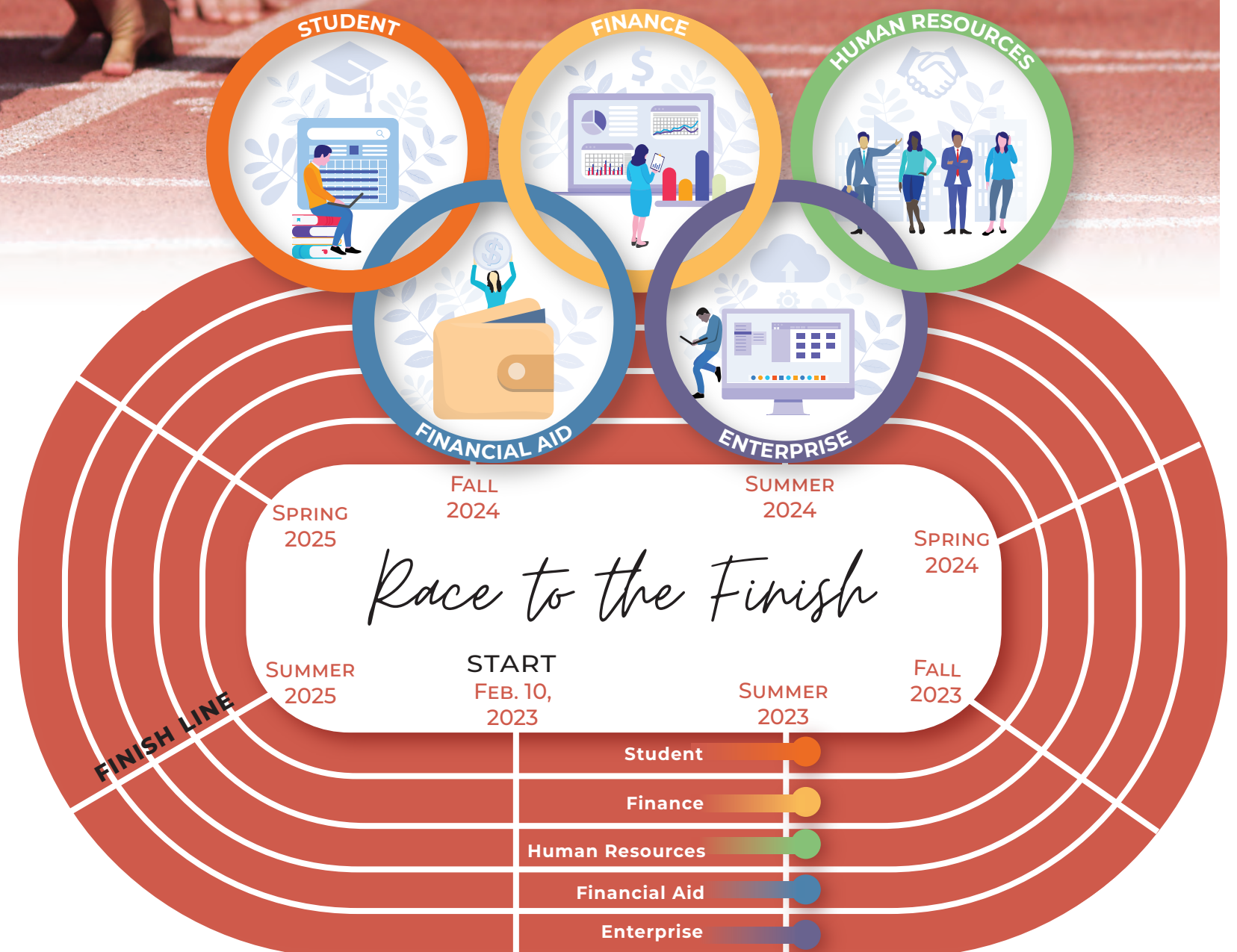
- **Foster Teamwork:** Just like the athletes who train and compete together, we want to encourage collaboration and synergistic efforts within our teams. By recognizing the unique strengths of each individual and leveraging them collectively, we can accomplish remarkable results.
- **Promote Excellence:** The pursuit of excellence is at the core of every Olympic athlete's journey. Through the implementation phases of Banner, we aspire to inspire and empower each employee to strive for greatness in their respective roles. Let us embrace a growth mindset and continuously challenge ourselves to reach new heights.

- **Encourage Innovation:** The Olympics often witness groundbreaking performances and innovations that redefine what is possible. Likewise, we encourage all employees to think outside the box, explore new ideas, and contribute to our organization's evolution. Let us foster an environment that encourages creative thinking and supports daring endeavors.

- **Celebrate Diversity:** The Olympic Games bring together athletes from every corner of the globe, showcasing the beauty of diversity. We believe that our organization thrives on the unique perspectives, backgrounds, and talents that each of us brings. Through the Team Banner campaign, we aim to celebrate and embrace our diversity, fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace for all.

Throughout the campaign, you can expect a series of communications and activities. We encourage you to get involved, support your colleagues, and immerse yourselves in the enthusiasm that comes with such an extraordinary endeavor.

We firmly believe that by embracing the Olympic spirit within our organization, we can unlock our collective potential, achieve remarkable goals, and create a positive impact. Let's come together as a team, inspired by the pursuit of excellence, and make the implementation of Banner a resounding success.



**Track Timeline:** Progress in Banner areas (shown in the Olympic rings) will be reflected by the position of the circles as they race around the track toward the finish line.





## District Graduates First EXCEL Academy Class

The EXCEL Leadership Academy launched this year and, in May, the first class of 27 employees graduated. The EXCEL Academy is designed to grow individual leadership skills, enhance

interpersonal and group communication, expand institutional knowledge, and further develop team-building skills. The EXCEL Academy inaugural cohort were provided an opportunity

to work with leaders across the District in an effort to move forward with the vision and mission of the District by working more effectively together as a leadership team.



## HR's B.L.O.O.M. Program Graduates First Class

A new program run by HR called BLOOM (Building Leadership Opportunities through Outstanding Mentorship) graduated its first cohort, who were awarded their certificates of completion on May 12, 2023 by Chancellor Barnes, Vice Chancellor Vyskocil, and Saddleback College President Stern. BLOOM provides those endeavoring to become

future community college faculty with an engaging, hands-on opportunity to preview the inner workings of this career. The program offers participants training in inclusive pedagogical development, equitable outcomes, comprehensive student support, and modern teaching methodologies, as well as invaluable insights into the profession.



# 2023-24 Student Trustee Sworn In



During the regularly scheduled Board meeting held on May 22, 2023, Saddleback College student, Katelyn Hidde was sworn-in by Board President Timothy Jemal to serve as the 2023-2024 Student Trustee. Katelyn will represent students from both Irvine Valley College and Saddleback College.

As student trustee, Katelyn's main initiatives will be to support and bring awareness to environmental issues as well as basic needs for those attending our colleges..

**"I hope to amplify the needs of**

**students, from food insecurity to housing. I want to be a voice for all students while serving,"** said Trustee Katelyn Hidde.

President of the Board Timothy Jemal said, "Katelyn Hidde's experience with the ASSC will serve her well during her term as student trustee. She will learn all the aspects of trusteeship and how to achieve her goals."

Katelyn is majoring in Environmental Policy and currently serves as a senator with the Associated Students of Saddleback College (ASSC).



## Commencements End Academic Year

On May 25, Irvine Valley College and Saddleback College held commencement ceremonies to confer degrees and certificates to thousands of SOCCCD students. Combined, the colleges had more than 10,000 graduates, with more than 2,000 students who graduated with honors. More than 5,000 students at both colleges will be transferring this fall to four-year colleges and universities.

Irvine Valley College had its youngest graduate ever, 11 year old Tycho Elling! He earned an associate degree in mathematics with magna cum laude honors.

In his opening remarks, Saddleback College President Dr. Elliot Stern commended the graduates for their persistence during the years of challenges of COVID-19.