

HORIZON

SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Newsletter from the Office of the Chancellor

Issue No. 9 / Summer 2024



District Graduates Second EXCEL Leadership Academy Class

The district's EXCEL Academy is a semester-long retreat and workshop series that is open to full-time and part-time classified staff, faculty, and managers. EXCEL provides an opportunity for employees to collaborate across campuses and departments in an effort to accomplish the district's goals by working more effectively as a team.

The EXCEL Academy was launched in 2023, graduating 27 employees in its first class. The 2024

class of 33 employees was lead by Vice Chancellor Dr. Cindy Vyskocil. In May, the graduating class came together for an off-site celebration (photo above) for completing the challenging course.

The participants met several times during the semester for three or more hours and also attended a retreat, where they addressed topics related to communication, team dynamics, personal / professional growth, and overall leadership style.



“Here in SOCCCD, we believe in collaboration and building teams of aspiring leaders who support each other on their development journey.”

— Dr. Cindy Vyskocil, Vice Chancellor of Human Resources.

Both Colleges Earn Reaccreditation

Welcome to the next edition of the Chancellor's Newsletter – HORIZON. We have so many exciting things to share including the wonderful news that Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College have both been reaccredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) for a full seven-year term. This significant achievement is a testament to our colleges' unwavering commitment to academic excellence, student success, and continuous improvement.

Reaccreditation is not merely a procedural milestone; it is a rigorous evaluation that reflects the dedication, hard work, and collaboration of our entire academic community. The ACCJC's comprehensive review process examines every facet of our institutions, from governance and financial stability to instructional quality and student services. This reaccreditation affirms that both Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College meet the highest standards of higher education.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, administrators, and students whose relentless efforts made this accomplishment possible. Your dedication to upholding the mission and values of our colleges is truly commendable. It is through your commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and academically enriching environment that we continue to



thrive as leaders in community college education.

This reaccreditation serves as a catalyst for our ongoing journey towards excellence. It provides us with a renewed sense of purpose and direction as we strive to innovate and enhance the educational experiences we offer. We are committed to leveraging this achievement to further improve our programs, expand our services, and strengthen our partnerships with local communities and industries.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the future and the opportunities that lie ahead. We remain steadfast in our mission to provide accessible, high-quality education that meets the evolving

needs of our diverse student population. Together, we will continue to uphold the standards of excellence that define Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College.

Thank you once again for your dedication and support.



*With gratitude,
Julianna M. Asperin Barnes*

New Student Trustee Clemente Sworn In

SOCCCD was proud to announce the appointment of Sharla Clemente as the newest member of its Board of Trustees. Her dedication to advocacy and rich background in student leadership make her an invaluable addition to the board.

As a student at IVC, Sharla has served as Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) within the Associated Students of Irvine Valley College (ASIVC). Her commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment has been instrumental in shaping her leadership skills, preparing her to be a voice for the student community.

"I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve as Student Trustee," Clemente stated. "I am eager to implement the lessons learned, coupled with my

background to be a voice for all students, but especially those students who come from marginalized groups."

Clemente's journey is nothing short of inspiring. As a former foster youth and now a foster parent, she brings a unique and compassionate perspective to her role. Her work as a rape and sex trafficking victim advocate and mentor highlights her dedication to supporting and uplifting underserved communities.

"Sharla Clemente embodies resilience and advocacy," said the SOCCCD Board of Trustees President, Timothy Jemal. **"Her personal and academic achievements, coupled with her dedication to an inclusive community, make her an exemplary leader."**



New Student Trustee Sharla Clemente will serve on the board from May 2024 to April 2025 as an advocate for students.



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. It was an exciting way to wrap up the academic year, with the colleges witnessing more than 10,000 graduates, with almost 20% of students earning some form of honors. More than 5,000 students district-wide are transferring this fall to four-year

colleges and universities. An impressive achievement was by Athena Elling, who at 11-years-old, was the youngest IVC graduate, earning an associate degree in Liberal Arts. Saddleback College President Dr. Elliot Stern commended the graduates for their persistence during the last four years of COVID-19 challenges and assured them that they are better prepared to overcome future obstacles.

2024 Employees of the Year

The district was proud to announce the Classified Professional and Manager Employees of the Year at an event on May 14. In attendance were District Services employees, as well as Board of Trustee Vice President Terri Rydell and Trustee Marcia Milchiker. The recognition underscores the dedication and excellence demonstrated by these individuals, who go above and beyond in their service to higher education and our community colleges.



Classified Professional of the Year

Judy Perez

Program Research Analyst

Judy was recognized for her enthusiastic support of the HR department and her contributions to the DEIA strategic goal objectives. Judy has played a vital role in developing the research and evaluation components of the BLOOM faculty mentor program and the EXCEL Leadership Academy.



Manager of the Year

Jackie Han

Assistant Director, Fiscal Services

Jackie was honored with the Manager of the Year award for her exemplary leadership, collaboration, and ability to inspire others. Her innovative approach to management has resulted in positive outcomes and enhanced the overall effectiveness of her department.

Years of Service

At the same May 14 ceremony, district leadership proudly acknowledged individuals for their years of dedicated employment by awarding service pins.



“We are thrilled to honor these exceptional individuals who have demonstrated outstanding dedication, leadership, and service to the district. Their commitment to excellence is truly inspiring and embodies the spirit of our district.”

Chancellor
Julianna Asperin Barnes, EdD

5 Years

Matt Blitch	Angie Gutierrez
Chris Constan	Gerlie Jeltema
Vanessa Cortez	Danielle Miller
Allen Dehnke	Nicholas Newkirk
Leah Dehnke	Cecilia Ray
Karen Dubert	Virginia Romero
Kristen Duggins	James Steeves
Medhanie Ephrem	Sonja Wyche

10 Years

Jackie Han	Anastasia Vendrovsky
Jorge Vargas	

15 Years

Josephine Bullen	Nicole Ortega
Ruby Hazzard	Sandra Pope
James Lozano	

20 Years

Misael Banderas

25 Years

Raul Gutierrez	Loc Pham
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Red / Mountains
are a call out to
Saddleback College

Oranges and Sun
are a homage to
district logos and
the county's past

Blue / Tree represent
Irvine Valley College



South Orange County

Community College District

District Adopts New Logo

In May 2024, a presentation was made to the Board of Trustees to announce a significant milestone in the evolution of our district's identity. After careful consideration and collaboration, we unveiled our new logo, symbolizing our commitment to growth, innovation, and excellence.

The new logo was designed after months of stakeholder meetings, district-wide surveys, and one-on-one interviews with the Chancellor and Executive Team as well as the Board of Trustees. The new logo reflects the essence of our community college district, embodying symbolism from both Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College. Our hopes are that it will come to represent

our dedication to academic excellence, diversity, and inclusivity, while also embracing our forward-thinking approach to education.

To ensure a smooth transition, a roll-out schedule has been developed and shared with staff to transition to the new logo across all platforms. The SOCCCD community will begin to see the new logo on all printed and online materials, signage, and promotional materials throughout the summer.

The District Public Affairs team knows that change can be difficult but appreciates the support and cooperation as we work together to implement our new logo effectively.

"I believe this new logo will resonate with our students, faculty, staff, and the broader community, strengthening our brand identity and positioning us for continued success in the years to come."

— Letitia Clark, SOCCCD Chief Communications Officer

Past Versions



2006 A color digital logo was adopted that retained the iconic elements (torch, book, oranges, mountain, sun) from the founding of the district.



1997 The district adopted a new name and also released a new simplified logo that kept the same visual elements.



Early Version Founded in 1967, the district went through a few logo versions before settling on this seal for more than 25 years.