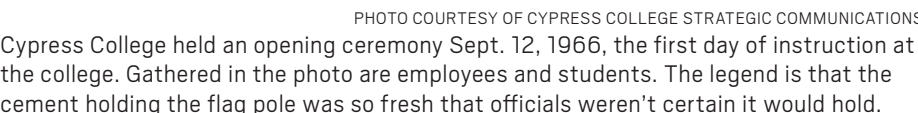




## One-on-one support helps students meet requirements

EJL LERTON » PAGE 3



## Fundamentals: Innovation, community involvement

The 110-acre college campus in Cypress, led by President Scott W. Thayer, currently serves about 16,000

The school was founded to fill the need for a community college in the area, one that offered students a lower-cost path to higher education, said Howard Kummerman, executive director of the nonprofit Cypress College Foundation. The first faculty was committed to its students and the community.

CYPRESS » PAGE 4

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INNOVATION

# Women’s initiative opens doors to leadership, advocacy

Inspiring a voice in the future of campuses and communities

By **Jenelyn Russo**  
contributing writer

Change begins when women have a seat at the table, the confidence to make their voices heard and the connections to turn ideas into action. At North Orange County Community College District, the Women in Power Spaces initiative is creating those opportunities and empowering women to lead and shape the future of their campuses and communities.

Established in 2025, WiPS promotes gender equity and social justice by addressing systemic barriers facing female-identifying people. Through learning, research and leadership opportunities, the initiative takes an intersectional approach to building connections and advancing equity in sectors such as healthcare, politics and education.

Kai Stearns Davis, NOCCCD’s chief communications officer for Public & Governmental Affairs, started the conversation around this initiative more than a year ago, as she and other district staff members recognized the need for a broader discussion about women, leadership and power.

“So the idea was, how do women get more power?” Stearns Davis said. “Who has the power? What does that mean for each person? I think that there’s a real need for these types of conversations to happen, especially in community college spaces.”

Those conversations began taking shape in fall 2025 when WiPS hosted its inaugural WiPS Convening, bringing together students, community leaders and professionals from a range of industries and backgrounds to explore the challenges women face in leadership and power. The turnout reinforced the importance of creating spaces for those



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NOCCCD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

From left, coordinators and members of the executive planning team for Women in Power Spaces Amabel Arredondo, Kai Stearns Davis, Melissa Ann Lum hold bouquets of appreciation at the recent WiPS Convening.

conversations.

“The feedback from that event, especially from the students, was that they had never been in spaces like this before where they could talk about things that are truly feminist issues,” Stearns Davis said.

Barbara Dunsheath, president of the NOCCCD board of trustees and co-chair and co-founder of the California

Community Colleges Women’s Caucus, was among the attendees at the inaugural WiPS Convening. She also served on a panel focused on education, where the discussion included encouraging female students to become more assertive voices in the classroom.

“There’s this intersection where it’s not just about having courses and degrees in women and gender studies, but also in supporting students and employees, making sure that they are treated equitably, including pay,” Dunsheath said.

Dunsheath also saw the WiPS Convening as an opportunity for the district to reach beyond its campuses and engage with the broader community.

“The people that attended were hungry for more,” Dunsheath said. “I think there’s momentum around it, and I think it’s a reaction to some of the sociopolitical changes that we’re seeing happening right now.”

In response, the NOCCCD hosted the 2nd Annual WiPS Convening last month with the theme “Mind the Gaps!” where attendees examined “how women can bridge the gap between where we are now and where we want to be.” Keynote speaker for the event was award-winning journalist and feminist advocate Rebecca Traister.

Participating for the second time was Darcy Totten, executive director of the California Commission on Women and Girls, a state agency focused on advancing gender equity and the well-being of women and girls through policy, research and advocacy.

Totten joined Jessica Ramey Stender, policy director and deputy legal director for Equal Rights Advocates, for a panel on the Stronger California Agenda, a statewide effort focused on advancing gender, racial and economic equity

through policy. Moderated by Stearns Davis, the discussion explored how advocacy and legislative action can help address barriers women face in the workplace and beyond.

“It’s an incredible thing that Kai has built, where she is putting all of these really powerful women in a room together, where it feels like nothing’s off the table,” Totten said. “Everybody is able to really get deep and have these big, connected conversations about what is impacting us collectively and individually in the moment.”

Now entering its second year, WiPS is expanding its reach across the district, with a leadership group and subcommittees made up entirely of volunteers to help guide the initiative. Student advocacy efforts and additional programming are planned for this academic year, including events at Fullerton College, Cypress College and North Orange Continuing Education.

“We’re going to focus on putting together an advocacy group as well as events to train students on how to go to Sacramento, Washington or their backyard to fight for equal rights and gender justice,” Stearns Davis said.

WiPS is rooted in the idea that women should not have to wait for an invitation to shape their futures. By creating spaces to come together, share ideas and work collectively, the initiative is bringing students into those conversations early and opening doors to leadership, advocacy and change.

“I’m a huge believer in the power of the collective,” Totten said. “We are not all the same ... and yet, we need to figure out how to get ourselves collectively into a space where we are all able to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits of what the folks that came before us have built.”

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— **Mia Nguyen**

*2023 Presidential Scholar of Distinction, representing Science, Engineering, and Math.*

This year, Cypress College celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our theme — “60 Years. One Cypress.” — highlights the most-defining personality trait of the campus: the sense that we invest in sharing the journey with our students.

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A program for the Women in Power Spaces Convening held at NOCCCD

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MODERNIZATION

# Measure J permits upgrades across district’s campuses

Renovations, new buildings  
are among improvements

By Lou Ponsi  
*contributing writer*

From new academic buildings to renovated arts complexes and upgraded infrastructure, completed projects made possible by the passage of Measure J are visible across all three campuses within the North Orange County Community College District.

Approved by voters in 2014, Measure J is a \$517 million bond measure designed to modernize aging facilities, expand academic capacity and bring campus infrastructure up to current standards.

Measure J projects are an investment in both current and future students and contribute to the long-term vitality of our communities, said John Parker, the district’s vice chancellor of administrative services.

“These projects reflect our commitment to providing exemplary academic programs and services while ensuring that students for generations to come have the facilities and resources they need to learn, grow and achieve their goals,” Parker said.

Rick Williams, facilities director for the NOCCCD, said the bond allows the district to replace obsolete buildings, upgrade technology and create learning environments that can adapt to future needs.

“We are planning for the future,” Williams said. “We have more flexible buildings now than what they were in the past.”

The scope of the upgrades is substantial, Williams said, with 23 projects completed at Cypress College, seven at Fullerton College and nine at the Anaheim campus.

At Cypress College, the flagship Measure J project was the Science, Engineering and Math Building — the first major build under the bond, Williams said.

“That one replaced the one that was built in 1965,” Williams said.

The new facility, which took about two and a half years to build, includes expanded labs designed for modern technology and scientific programs, along with a small planetarium on the northwest corner.

Cypress also completed an award-winning Veterans Resource Center, which Williams described as “a beautiful facility” with a Tribute Garden featuring a pond, bridge and flags for each branch of the military to honor those who served.

The campus’s next Measure J project is an upgrade to the women’s softball field, Williams said, with upgrades including new dugouts and field enhancements.

A complete renovation of Cypress’s Fine Arts Building, originally constructed in 1968, is also nearing completion and was supported by \$30 million in state funding, Williams said.

Upgrades include a state-of-the-art black box theater, auditoriums inside, art and sculpture.

At Fullerton College, the oldest of the three campuses, Williams said the district has conferred with the Fullerton Historical Society to ensure the aesthetics and architecture reflect the historic landscape of the campus.

“Their involvement has helped us keep ... a presence consistent with what Fullerton College was built (on),” Williams said.

Among the most visible additions at Fullerton College is the three-story Humanities Building, a progressive design-build project that was completed under budget and ahead of schedule, the facilities director said.

Another major Fullerton project is the new Student Services Building on Chapman Avenue, a two-story facility that includes a new Veterans Center.

The largest project currently underway



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLAKE CASTILLO

An aerial photo of the newly renovated 300 Building taken by Fullerton College student Blake Castillo



PHOTO COURTESY OF FULLERTON COLLEGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Ongoing construction of the Performing Arts Center at Fullerton College as of September 2026

at Fullerton is the Music, Drama and Performing Arts Complex, also being paid for with matching state funds.

The new complex will be earthquake-safe, sustainable and designed to support the college’s “dynamic music and ... theater arts and performing arts program,” Williams said.

At the Anaheim Campus, Measure J funds have been used to make structural and aesthetic improvements to a 10-story building that was once a hospital.

The district recently completed a major waterproofing project on the

upper parking deck, mostly paid for by the state.

The campus is now undergoing a transformation of its exterior space, which involves the conversion of a lower parking area into a quad-like park for graduations, events and student gatherings.

“They wanted to have some place they could call the heart of the campus,” Williams said. “It will take away the hospital feel,” Williams said.

Measure J has also funded technology upgrades at all three campuses, including

Wi-Fi and network upgrades at each campus.

“We have full wireless access for the students,” he said. “They can sit anywhere on the campus and use the internet. Instead of going to the physical library, they have access to it onsite anywhere.”

The district maintains a Measure J webpage with project updates, images and reports. The webpage is updated about once a month.

An oversight committee also reviews spending and keeps documentation transparent, Williams said.

## Fullerton

FROM PAGE 1

at Fullerton College, referring to the acronym for Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

“What you think about the potential impact we get to have in terms of transforming the lives of students, these are the students who have the most to gain from an institutional partnership. If I take a step back and think about the purpose of each institution and the accountability, one of our goals is to understand the process our students are going on. We need to do better. ... What can we do to better to support student outcomes?”

The genesis for that began with Barco and Arriaza attending the Aspen-AASCU Transfer Student Success Intensive, a yearlong virtual workshop designed to ensure every student has a clear transfer pathway, personalized guidance and support to make the transfer process less intimidating. Arriaza and Barco then spent a year writing a Strategic Transfer Excellence Plan that provided the framework for the partnership.

The overall goals: improve the three-year transfer rate for Fullerton College Students; increase the number of transfer students from Fullerton College

to CSUF; increase the percentage of incoming Fullerton College transfers who graduate within two years; and establish a sense of belonging among Fullerton College students.

To meet those goals, the two institutions set up the Future Titans Center at Fullerton College, which brings CSUF representatives and services directly to the Fullerton College campus. Students get personalized support on financial aid, transfer requirements, guaranteed admission pathways, course advisement and counseling on their specific bachelor’s degree course requirements.

“We want it to be a place where students can receive one-on-one support and be part of group activities, workshops and events,” De La Torre said. “I think it’s an opportunity for students to begin to feel that they are a part of Cal State Fullerton.”

Both institutions are sharing their across-the-board data on such elements as financial aid, admissions information and students rejected for admission — the latter providing Fullerton College administrators a blueprint for providing support and guidance. The data sharing is a key element to the partnership that Barco and De La Torre said will allow both institutions to address problems along the way.

“When I think about big-picture educational ecosystems that are responsive to student needs, this is what it looks like,” De La Torre said.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL GOULDING, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Fullerton College President Cynthia Olivo and CSUF President Ronald S. Rochon look forward to the benefits of the Future Titan Center.

EMERITUS PROGRAM

# Anaheim resident Irving Schwartz still going strong at 100

## Continuing Education keeps him active

By Larry Urish  
contributing writer

When asked about the key to a long, productive life, Irving Schwartz once suggested, tongue in cheek, “Hershey’s chocolate and Irish whiskey.” Mr. Schwartz is clearly an authority on longevity. After all, he’s living proof that 100 is the new 80.

Not your run-of-the-mill centenarian, Irving, who still lives alone in Anaheim, partakes in rigorous exercise classes twice a week, enjoys dancing, cooks for himself and plays a take-no-prisoners game of poker. In lieu of chocolate and whiskey, one key element behind his active life as he powers toward 101 is his involvement with the North Orange Continuing Education’s Emeritus Program, composed of tuition-free classes for seniors (anyone 18 or older is welcome). NOCE Emeritus classes run the gamut and include everything from Creative Writing, Painting and Senior Chorus to the History of Comedy, Food Preparation and Health and Wellness.

One reason Irving is still going strong at the triple-figure mark has been his 30 years of participation in health and wellness classes. “They force me to get up and go,” he said. “If I didn’t, I’d just be sitting around. The classes are keeping me alive, and I really look forward to them.”

Emeritus Program Health and Wellness instructor Janine Wotring said, “I’ve been working with Irving for 15 years. He takes two of my classes, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The classes (at the Downtown Anaheim Community Center) involve more than exercises. We talk about different subjects, such as nutrition, a particular chronic illness or the importance of sleep.”

Exercise is nothing new to Irving. “Years ago, I was a swing dancer,” he said. “I used to give exhibitions, and I taught Janine some dances. I can’t move like I used to, but I still dance with my walker.”

“We constantly talk about ‘Dancing with the Stars,’ his favorite show,” Wotring said. “So I incorporate some dances into my exercise program. I like to tell Irving he’s the King of Dancing. And we both love to cook. He’s always bringing up great recipes. ... He also attends a Friendship Lunch at the Center



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOCE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS  
Centenarian Irving Schwartz is a regular face at the North Orange Continuing Education’s Emeritus Program activities.

on the second Tuesday of the month, as well as a monthly membership meeting.”

“I still cook every day when I don’t go out,” Irving said. “I used to call bingo games three times a week, and I really enjoy playing poker.”

He may “enjoy” playing poker, but that doesn’t mean he isn’t lethal. For example, eight years ago, at the 2018 World Series of Poker’s Super Seniors No-Limit Hold ’Em event in Las Vegas, Irving outlasted 1,934 other participants, placing 257th and walking away with \$1,625. Not bad for a young whippersnapper of 92.

“I should be comped a free steak dinner for (my age) alone,” Schwartz told Poker News. To this day, he still loves playing poker.

Research studies have repeatedly shown that people live longer, happier, more productive lives if they engage in physical activity, develop a sense of purpose, socialize with friends and loved ones, and reduce chronic stress. Thanks to NOCE’s Emeritus Program, these key elements are available to seniors

throughout Orange County.

The Emeritus Program is just one of the many courses and programs offered by North County Continuing Education. The noncredit arm of the North Orange County Community College District, NOCE is the fourth-largest community college-based continuing and community education program in California. Serving more than 15,000 students annually, it offers basic-skills tutoring, career technical education classes, disability support services, English as a second language and U.S. citizenship classes, high-school diploma, GED and college-prep classes and more. Along with community centers in Anaheim, Cypress and Fullerton, NOCE classes are available at dozens of locations: K-12 schools, churches, senior centers and skilled-nursing and rehab facilities.

Seniors like Irving particularly benefit through NOCE’s programs. “There’s so much medical and behavioral data that show how individuals who engage in

lifelong learning have better physical and mental health, said Martha Turner, dean of NOCE’s Lifeskills Education Advancement Program, which oversees the Emeritus Program. “Lifelong learning can extend and increase their quality of life as the aging process continues.”

Irving’s longtime participation in North County Continuing Education hasn’t gone unnoticed. He received the Student Success Award during the May 2025 NOCE Commencement and Student Success Ceremony. (He was only 99 then.) And last March, he celebrated his 100th birthday at the Downtown Anaheim Senior Center. News of hitting the one-century mark made it all the way to Washington, D.C., where Lou Correa, U.S. representative for California’s 46th congressional district, recognized Irving Schwartz on the House floor.

Irving won’t be slowing down any time soon. “I’ve been doing these exercise classes for so long,” he said. “I rarely miss one. They give me a chance to meet people, and they give my life purpose.”

## Cypress

FROM PAGE 1

Alumni often tell Kummerman what they remember most about their years at Cypress College is the family atmosphere and “the way people would go above and beyond to help them to achieve,” he said. Chemistry professor Tom Lubin, who was also the basketball coach, stands out in the memories of many alumni for his enthusiastic support of students, including finding them housing and transportation, even if it meant giving a bicycle to a student.

“I think that is still what we have today, 60 years later,” Kummerman said. “I think it’s what defines us as a community college.” The Cypress Foundation plays a critical role in that effort, he said, by “helping to meet our students where there are gaps in their ability to achieve their goals,” he said. This includes emergency assistance and scholarships.

“Last year, we gave \$550,000 in scholarships,” Kummerman said. “Within 10 years, I see us at least doubling that, and hopefully sooner.” The college has recently received several significant gifts, he said. This support recognizes the need for future skilled workers in areas such as healthcare, aviation, HVAC, culinary arts and automotive technology. “We’re making sure that students are successful for the future,” he said.

The college’s many programs are housed within original buildings designed in the Brutalist style, characterized by clean lines of concrete and glass, said Marc Posner, chief campus communications officer. The campus today includes a 130-foot campanile, a tennis center, aquatic center, theater, a duck pond and contemporary outdoor sculpture. Then-and-now photos from Cypress College history will be exhibited in the art gallery.

One architectural focal point is a large exterior concrete sculptural facade that surrounds a lecture hall and rooftop patio, created by renowned artist Sergio O’Cádiz Moctezuma in 1967. As part of the Cypress College 60th anniversary celebrations, a book about the Orange County artist will be published, Posner said. It was created by associate professor of art Janet Owen Driggs with the help of the daughter of O’Cádiz Moctezuma.

Throughout 2026, the college’s milestone anniversary has been acknowledged at annual events such as the 41st Golf Classic and the Americana Awards, a gala held at the Westin Hotel that recognizes local citizens of the year, Kummerman said. Another, Pups ‘N Pints, on Oct. 16 invites community, alumni and retired faculty and staff to bring their dogs to the campus for a casual evening of beer and food.

The celebrations will continue into the spring of 2027, when the college will host a music festival at the campus

pond, replicating concerts held there in years past, Posner said.

Alumni tend to stay involved with Cypress College, Kummerman said. Many have established businesses in the community and credit their years at the college for their success, he said. Retired faculty also remain connected with Cy-

press College.

“They’re an integral part, as donors and supporters of the community, and have been because of their experience,” Kummerman said. “So, as we’re celebrating our 60th anniversary, they’re a big part of who we are and part of our celebration.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF CYPRESS COLLEGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Cypress College’s first three permanent buildings are seen in this image, taken from Valley View Street. Visible are the campanile and the Sergio O’Cádiz “Library Mural” on the front of what is now the Cypress College Complex Building.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CYPRESS COLLEGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Students participate in commencement at Cypress College in this photograph from the late 1990s.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FULLERTON COLLEGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Students relax in front of the Cypress College Library.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Leading the way in innovative noncredit learning

NOCE Strategic Communications

For more than 50 years, North Orange Continuing Education has helped adults build stronger futures through tuition-free education, workforce preparation, and programs designed to meet learners where they are. Today, NOCE is gaining statewide recognition as a leader in noncredit education, earning several Model Program designations by the California Adult Education Program.

This month, the California Adult Education Program will recognize NOCE’s Student Services as a Model Program, highlighting a holistic approach that addresses an important reality for adult learners: success in the classroom often depends on what happens outside of it.

For many students, NOCE is the first experience in an educational setting, or one that has welcomed them back to school. Most noncredit students balance work, family responsibilities, transportation challenges, and financial pressures while pursuing their educational and career goals.

NOCE responds by bringing academic and wraparound services together to help students overcome barriers. NOCE’s holistic approach brings together basic needs support, specialized student programs, proactive case management, counseling, leadership development, and community partnerships.

Students can access a campus food pantry, housing navigation, laptops and internet hotspots, scholarships and book awards, clothing resources, mental health supports, and connections to community agencies. Specialized programs such as the Rising Scholars, Grads to Be, and Pride Space, provide additional support, workshops, and opportunities for belonging.

“Much of the success of the holistic approach is due to the personal touch of Student Navigators, classified professionals and support staff, and faculty,” says Deborah Perkins, Dean of Counseling and Student Services. “NOCE counselors provide proactive interventions, classroom presentations, drop-in hours and group student education planning to ensure students receive information and support before barriers become obstacles to completion.”

NOCE’s commitment to student-centered education was also recognized in 2025, when the Disability Support Services Program was selected as a CAEP Model Program. The program was recognized for its exemplary work in pathways and persistence, distinguish-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOCE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Russell Worthington of the NOCE Food Pantry staff is ready and excited to assist students at the Anaheim Campus Food Pantry.

ing NOCE’s approach to serving adults with disabilities as a model that has informed adult education programs throughout California.

The DSS Program serves adults with disabilities through inclusive educational programs, support services, and workforce development opportunities designed to help students succeed in higher education and competitive employment. The program supports students as they transition from K-12 education into postsecondary education and beyond, providing instruction and services in academic foundations, employment skills, and independent living.

NOCE’s DSS program serves students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and cognitive disabilities through a combination of on-campus, online, and community-partnered instruction. Importantly, the program goes beyond traditional academic accommodations.

Students can access specialized counseling, educational coaching, peer mentoring, neurodivergent learner labs, bus mobility training, and the Inclusion Ally

program, which prepares faculty and staff to better support student inclusion and persistence.

Workforce development is another defining feature of the program. DSS collaborates with NOCE’s Career Technical Education programs to create pathways into both noncredit and credit-based certificate programs, including opportunities in healthcare, digital marketing, retail, childcare, and food service. Workforce services help students establish employment goals, develop resumes, practice interviewing skills, pursue job placements, and work toward competitive employment.

“The program’s success is reflected in the experiences of our students,” says DSS Program Dean Adam Gottdank. “Thousands of learners have participated in educational coaching, career programs, and support labs with students earning high school diplomas, professional certificates, and employment. One key benefit for nearly all DSS students is

the increase in confidence.”

The strength of DSS also comes from its collaborative model. NOCE works with regional consortia, professional organizations, and community partners to develop innovative, replicable and research-based approaches to inclusion. Through CAEP and other funding sources, the program continues to expand opportunities for students with disabilities while demonstrating how adult education can connect learning, independence, and employment to long-term student success.

“We are grateful to (the California Adult Education Program) for recognizing NOCE with these Model Program designations,” says NOCE President Valentina Purtell. “They reflect what makes NOCE distinctive: a belief that adult education is about more than earning a certificate or completing a class. It is about creating opportunities, removing barriers, and building pathways to success for our students.”

OVERSIGHT

NOCCCD Trustee Dunsheath new president of state board

NOCCCD Strategic Communications

In May, NOCCCD Trustee Barbara Dunsheath was sworn in by the California Community College Trustees Board as its newly-elected president. The state board takes positions on education policy issues that come before the California Community College Board of Governors, the state legislature, and other relevant state-level boards and commissions.

“It is a great honor to be chosen by my fellow trustees to lead the CCCT board. I am passionate about community colleges,” Dunsheath said. “We are the most affordable avenue of higher education in the state, serving over 2.1 million students. We offer high-quality courses for the lowest student and taxpayer cost, and we serve as a gateway to the middle class.

“I am proud to represent North Orange County Community College District at the state level. My focus is to support students on their educational journey both in our district and for the state of California. Students are our guiding stars.”

Dunsheath, a NOCCCD trustee since 2005, is currently president of the NOCCCD Board of Trustees. This year, Dunsheath was also awarded the Community College League of California’s “Fulfilling the Trust Award,” which recognizes the dedication and service of the state’s community college trustees.

Dunsheath is a long-serving educator and community college leader with deep commitment to student success. A retired professor of history at East Los Angeles College, she has held key roles in accreditation, professional development, and distance education. She serves as a commissioner of the California Chancellor’s Office Accreditation Commission and a co-founder of the California Community Colleges Women’s Caucus.

At NOCCCD she has served on many committees over the years, including as board representative to the District Audit Committee; Cypress College Foundation member; Americana Committee member; Legacy Society Committee member and on the Orange County Legislative Task Force.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOCCCD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Barbara Dunsheath, center, accepts her “Fulfilling the Trust” award along with other honorees during the Annual Trustees Conference in May.



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AWARD

# Cypress College named California Exemplary Dual Enrollment School

Cypress College Strategic Communications

Cypress College has been named a 2026 California Exemplary Dual Enrollment School, one of 32 institutions statewide to receive the recognition from the California Department of Education. Schools that receive the designation hold the title for two years.

The California Exemplary Dual Enrollment Award recognizes schools with strong dual enrollment programs that give high school students the opportunity to take college courses and earn credits before graduating. Free to participating students, Dual Enrollment is a statewide initiative intended to increase access to college, to reduce the overall cost of attending college, and to increase college completion. The program aligns with the College Prom-

ise — known at Cypress College as the Charger Experience Program — which provides two years of tuition-free attendance to qualifying, first-time college students. Students who participate can complete an associates degree, university transfer, and/or career certification without incurring enrollment fees.

These programs include Automotive Technology, health-related programs such as Nursing, Radiologic Technology, Dental Hygiene and HVAC. Recipients of the California Exemplary Dual Enrollment Award were evaluated across several areas of program excellence, including strong collaboration between colleges, high schools, families, community partners and industry. Schools were also required to demonstrate sustained success through a commitment to equity, alignment between college and district planning, opportu-

nities for students to earn dual credit toward high school graduation, clear academic pathways, measurable outcomes and comprehensive student support systems.

“The success of this program is driven by our students, their determination, growth and achievements, and by Cypress College’s commitment to supporting them every step of the way,” said Stephanie Teer, director of dual enrollment at Cypress College.

Since its launch in 2016, Cypress College’s dual enrollment program has supported over 10,000 students and maintains an overall course success rate of 92.3%. Through partnerships with local school districts, the college offers College and Career Access Pathways that allow high school students to take college courses and begin earning credit toward certificates and associate degrees.

Cypress College collaborates with several school districts across the region, including Anaheim Union High School District, Fullerton Joint Union High School District, Garden Grove Unified School District, Los Alamitos Unified School District and Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District. These partnerships help align coursework with student goals and expand access to higher education opportunities.

Students in the program are supported through a range of services, including educational planning, academic counseling, success workshops and ongoing support from dedicated dual enrollment staff. The college is continuing to align its program with Vision 2030, a California Community Colleges initiative, focusing on strengthening long-term academic pathways and supporting student success beyond high school.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CYPRESS COLLEGE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Cypress College's annual Connect2Cypress draws more than 1,000 potential students to campus each fall for the opportunity to learn about the North Orange County Community College's educational programs and support services. Cypress College offers two years free of tuition to qualifying first-time college students as part of its Charger Experience (Promise) Program. This initiative provides a seamless path from high school to the university while dramatically increasing access to higher education by reducing the overall cost of attendance.

## CYPRESS COLLEGE & FULLERTON COLLEGE

# dual enrollment



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