

# CHANCELLOR'S NEWSLETTER



## CHANCELLOR'S PERSPECTIVE

As we complete the first quarter of 2016, please allow me to share some of the highlights of what the Ventura County Community College District has accomplished in our past two months of this New Year. We kicked January off with the Board of Trustees honoring the first-ever soccer championship of the Oxnard College men's varsity team; began February celebrating Moorpark College Ira the Lion's 2nd birthday; and praised Ventura College for its recognition as one of the top 150 community colleges in the nation in the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

The District's Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOC) launched our new Diversity Dashboard -- a tool to help employees follow the District's progress in expanding its diversity outreach initiatives, while a visit from the state Board of Governors Member Arnoldo Avalos further inspired us to paint with a broader brush and expand how we interact with students -- finding new ways to engage and connect with them on their terms (more to come).

Board Chair Larry Kennedy, Trustees Hernandez and Perez, and I represented the District at the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., February 9-11, with more than 1,000 enthusiastic trustees from community colleges across the nation. We participated in many sessions and contributed to the discussions on campus safety and security and America's College Promise. We met with staff of the house committee on veterans affairs and the new Secretary of Education, to name a few. The Board also approved the purchase of a new District Administrative Center in Camarillo, CA, with an anticipated move-in date of January 2017, and we began a comprehensive review of board policies. Board policies are the voice of the board of trustees. Yes -- all of this and more happened in just the first two months of 2016.

While there is still much to do, it is important to celebrate and remind ourselves of our accomplishments, thereby increasing our perspective as we move forward. These important



VCCCD Chancellor  
Bernard Luskin

accomplishments and changes affect our ability to serve students. In addition, accomplishments shape the long-term growth of programs and services in future generations of students, employees, employers, and the community we serve. Thanks for supporting the VCCCD and thank you for all you do.

*Dr. Bernard Luskin, Chancellor*

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*New Camarillo location for the VCCCD district office.*

## Return to Camarillo, future home of the District

The VCCCD is no stranger to Camarillo. The District moved to its current location on Stanley Avenue from Camarillo in 2006. The Board of Trustees voted to return to Camarillo during the Board meeting on January 19, 2016, when they approved the purchase of the property at 730 Paseo Camarillo, Camarillo, CA -- a 40,000 square foot office building on 3.53 acres of land --for the new District Administrative Center. The sales agreement has been signed and escrow opened with a \$75,000 deposit on February 9, 2016;

*continued on page 8*



Ventura College Women's Basketball Team honor their Favorite Teachers

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

### Ventura College Favorite Teachers

This year the sophomore class of the Ventura College women's basketball team selected their favorite teachers. This time honored tradition has been going on for 11 years. It has proven to highlight the wonderful professors the college has and to show how a small act or encouraging word can alter the course of one student's path in a positive way.

This year Chancellor, Dr. Bernard Luskin, Ventura College President Dr. Greg Gillespie, Board of Trustee Steve Blum, and Ventura College Faculty Senate Secretary Colleen Coffey honored the 2016 recipients. Since the tradition began, 62 professors have received this prestigious award. Each instructor has gone above and beyond what is listed on the syllabus. Through their actions, mutual respect, and genuine care, they've provided these students with candid life lessons.

This year's honorees are:

- Gary Amar, Speech**  
Selected by Brooke Zamora
- Ken Drake, Business**  
Selected by Tatum Maciel
- Ty Gardner, Anatomy**  
Selected by Felicia Magaña

- Liz Kraus, English**  
Selected by Lexy Hinojosa
- Niki Milani, Psychology**  
Selected by Amani White
- Lauri Moore, Sociology**  
Selected by Shiloh Smith
- Farzeen Nasri, Political Science**  
Selected by Makenna Murray
- Ted Prell, Criminal Justice**  
Selected by Marissa Hurtado
- Joey Ramirez, Health**  
Selected by Aubri Smith
- Brent Wilson, Music**  
Selected by Erin Ross

The common thread in each student's essay was an instructor who incorporated everyday life lessons, current events, pop culture, humor, and most importantly motivation and self-esteem into student interactions.

The effect of a good instructor is immeasurable; their influence has the power to change the course of one student's life with just a simple word, or act of kindness. These ten professors have done just that. There is an insightful quote that says "Students don't care how much



VC student Makenna Murray nominated her favorite teacher, Farzeen Nasri.



VC student Erin Ross nominated her favorite teacher Brent Wilson.

you know until they know how much you care," Anonymous.

It seems that these ten professors have embodied this very quote and this outstanding program is a testament to the integrity of our faculty at Ventura College.

## Awards and Recognitions

### 2016 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year Nominees and District Winner

#### *Announcing the 2016 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year*

Every year the Ventura County Community College District honors the Classified Employee of the Year and this year four outstanding individuals who are each deserving of the honor and distinction of the coveted title, were congratulated and honored in the February 2016 Board of Trustees meeting; and the winner was announced.

**Karla Banks**

*Executive Assistant  
Oxnard College*

**Laura Galvan**

*Executive Assistant  
District Administrative Center*

**Kerry Mehle**

*Graphic Communications Technician  
Moorpark College*

**Peder Nielsen**

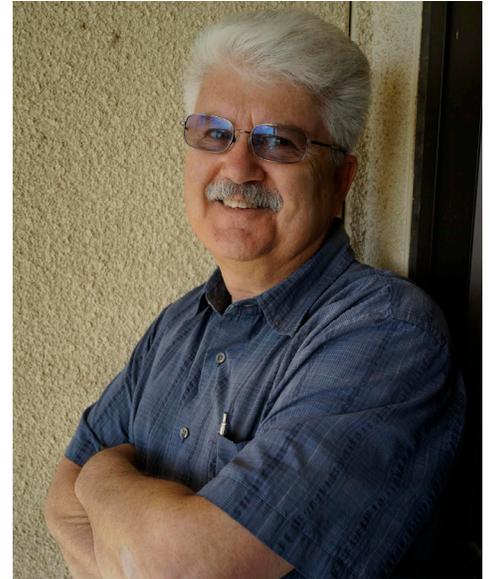
*PE/Athletic Equipment Manager  
Ventura College*

While each have demonstrated an exemplary level of commitment to the mission of community colleges, it was Kerry Mehle, graphic communications technician at Moorpark College who was chosen as District winner. Mehle is a 24-year District employee at Moorpark

College. He provides beautiful printed materials for the college and departments all over the District. Mehle regularly works miracles to finish projects within deadlines and budgets, delivering with cordiality and a smile. He is a mentor to the Multimedia and Design students and provides student internship opportunities in the print shop.

Mehle has served in leadership positions at his church in Santa Paula for 14 years, while helping build the church's education building, and in leadership at Ventura Missionary Church for the past 11 years. Using his own money and vacation time, he traveled twice to Alabama to help with the Hurricane Katrina clean-up and rebuilding. Mehle has also helped organize cancer research fundraisers with Relay for Life and Making Strides walks. He is a true cheerleader for our community, Moorpark College and the District.

Mehle's name will be forwarded to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors for consideration as the statewide 2016 California Community Colleges Classified Employee of the Year. If he wins the statewide title, he will receive \$500.00 and a commemorative plaque from the Foundation for California



*Congratulations to Kerry Mehle, Graphic Communications Technician at Moorpark College. Mehle was awarded the 2016 Moorpark College Classified Employee of the Year and has been selected as the 2016 VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year.*

Community Colleges. Last year, Vance Manakas of Moorpark College was honored at the district and state level.

The VCCCD Classified Employee of the Year program is sponsored by the Classified Professional Development Committee in cooperation with the Classified Senates of Moorpark College, Oxnard College and Ventura College.

Each year it is an honor to recognize a VCCCD employee for their service to the district, the colleges, and their community. Congratulations, Kerry Mehle!



*Karla Banks, 2016 Classified Employee of the Year, representing Oxnard College.*



*Peder Nielsen, 2016 Classified Employee of the Year, representing Ventura College.*



*Laura Galvan, 2016 Classified Employee of the Year, representing the District Administrative Center.*

## Auschwitz Escape: The Klara Wizel Story

Congratulations to Moorpark College adjunct professor Randy Gifford for his first published book, *Auschwitz Escape: The Klara Wizel Story*.

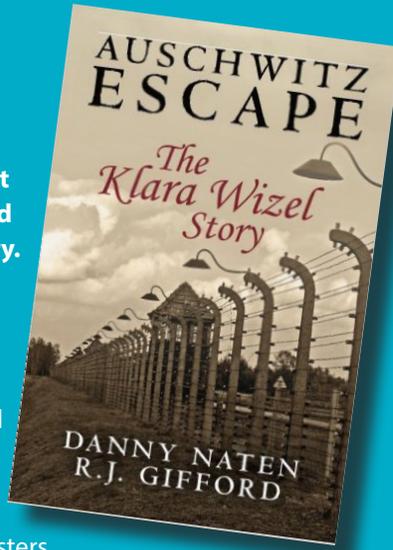
A Non-fiction historical autobiography about Klara Wizel, a young Hungarian Jewish girl, captured with her family During World War II and imprisoned in Auschwitz-Birkenau; the most notorious Nazi extermination center. Wizel watches in horror as Doctor Josef Mengele, known as The Great Selector and Murderer in White sends her parents, older sister, and younger brother to the gas chamber. Her two sisters and Wizel were sent to the women's barracks to wait in constant fear until Mengele orders Wizel to perish in the gas chambers. In an incredible turn of events, Wizel escapes the gas chamber and Auschwitz. Wizel is the only known escapee of record to evade Mengele's selection and the Nazi concentration camp. Her story is harrowing, disturbing, and a great reminder of why we must never forget the atrocities of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust.

Professor Gifford has chosen to write a poignant account of Klara Wizel's story, one story of the millions that are a part of one of the most tragic periods and events in history.

Klara Wizel is approaching her 90's and one of the few survivors still alive today to tell her story.

We are thrilled to be able to shine a light on Professor Gifford's wonderful accomplishment. We encourage everyone to read about Wizel's personal account and traumatic journey to freedom.

*Gifford's book can be found on Amazon.com at [www.amazon.com/Auschwitz-Escape-Klara-Wizel-Story/dp/1502416395](http://www.amazon.com/Auschwitz-Escape-Klara-Wizel-Story/dp/1502416395)*



## What's New at the Zoo



*Ira enjoys a hand-created "King's Cake" made especially by the EATM students for his 2nd birthday celebration.*

## The Pride of the District Turns 2

It was a roaring good time at America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College as families, zoo staff, student trainers, and the community took time to celebrate Ira the Lion's 2nd birthday with a party on Saturday, February 6. The "King of the Campus" had more than 1,000 attendees contribute to the success of his party. Board Trustee Stephen Blum and his family enjoyed watching Ira tear open his gifts and dive into his special feast fit for a king. Ira's roar is maturing and he's grown to nearly seven feet long. "His mane is spectacular and he looks like a developed teenager," stated Blum. Kids love him and adults adore him. Participants sang Happy Birthday and wore crowns that served as a keepsake in remembrance of this royal celebration. EATM Zoo Technician, Mara Rodriguez, expressed her appreciation for the ongoing support they receive from the community for the program.

## State Board of Governors member Arnoldo Avalos visits VCCCD



State Board of Governors member Arnoldo Avalos (far right) next to Ventura County Community College District Chancellor Bernard Luskin and Student Trustee Ilse Maymes during his visit to the District on Friday, February 26, 2016. Avalos spent time engaging with students from Moorpark, Oxnard and Ventura College after sitting in on the District Council on Accreditation and Planning and Consultation Council meetings. VCCCD is one of more than 25 districts that Avalos has visited since his appointment. His visit culminated with a tour of Ventura College hosted by Vice Chancellor Educational Services Rick Post (far left), Ventura College Foundation Executive Director Norbert Tan, Director of Major and Planned Giving Anne Paul King and Dean/Athletic Director Will Cowen.

## Commencement



### Oxnard College

May 18, 2016, 6:00 pm

### Ventura College

May 19, 2016, 10:00 am

### Moorpark College

May 19, 2016, 5:30 pm

## Awards and Recognitions

### Ventura College at the Top of its Game

We salute Ventura College president Greg Gillespie for his dedication and hard work which has led to the college being named one of the nation's top 150 community colleges in the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. This distinction makes Ventura College eligible to compete for the 2017 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and \$1 million dollars in prize funds, as well as Siemens Technical Scholars Program student scholarships, highlighting the critical importance of improving student success in America's community colleges.

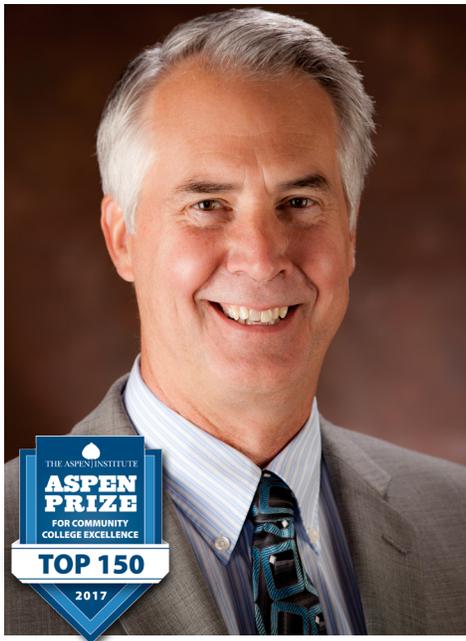
The Prize, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges and recognizes institutions for exceptional student outcomes in four areas:

- > **student learning**
- > **certificate and degree completion**
- > **employment and earnings, and access**
- > **success for minority and low-income students**

Nearly half of America's college students attend community college, with more than seven million students, youth and adult learners, working towards certificates and degrees in these institutions across the country.

This year, California saw the largest increase among states in the number of colleges eligible for the Prize, tripling from seven to 21 since the last Prize cycle in 2015. Most states saw only small changes in the number of eligible institutions.

Ventura College and 149 other community colleges were selected from a national pool of more than 1,000 public two-year colleges using publicly available data on student outcomes in three areas:



> **Performance (retention, graduation rates including transfers, and degrees and certificates per 100 full-time equivalent students)**

> **Improvement (awarded for steady improvement in each performance metric over time)**

> **Equity (evidence of strong completion outcomes for minority and low-income students)**

Ventura College has been invited to submit an application to the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence containing detailed data on degree and certificate completion (including progress and transfer rates), labor market outcomes (employment and earnings), and student learning outcomes.

The ten finalists will be named in fall 2016. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional measureable information. A distinguished Prize Jury will then select a grand prize winner and a few finalists with distinction in early 2017.

Once again, Congratulations, President Gillespie and the entire Ventura College administration, faculty and staff!

### Oxnard College Veterans Center

During the 2015-16 fiscal year, Oxnard College was able to provide one-on-one career counseling to 448 veteran students or their dependents. The 448 veteran students/dependents participated in our Student Services and Support Program (3SP), identified a career goal and developed an educational plan to help them successfully achieve their academic and career goals.

The center has increased its outreach to veteran dependents and met its goal of increasing veteran enrollment, promoting VET Center services to veteran students who are not using their GI Bill, and outreach into the community to promote VET Center services to veterans.

Oxnard College VET Center and "Boots to Books" grant also received its second award of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) from the Ventura County Community Foundation. This award is the second installment of the program grant in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). The grant has helped the center maintain its part-time counselor and counseling assistant. These positions are dedicated to support services for veterans and their dependents. Vice President Student Services Oscar Cobian and Veteran Center Coordinator Leo Orange will continue their leadership in providing our one-on-one counseling/advising, orientation, assessment, educational plans, and workshops for our veterans. They have a strong vision for the VET Center at Oxnard College and provide support services for our veterans and dependents.



## SHIFT HAPPENS New Hires and Promotions

### Sherice Bellamy

Public Information Officer, January 6, 2016

### Catherine Bojorquez

Budget Director, January 19, 2016

### Jeff Erskine

Network Administrator I, February 1, 2016

### Jessica Lau

Accounting Technician, February 9, 2016

## Diversity Summit

At the top of the new year the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office hosted the Regional Diversity Summit at EATM in Moorpark College. Approximately 120 participants from VCCCD and beyond learned more about the importance and benefits of diversity and equality for all students from the following presenters:

### Dr. Edward Bush

President, Cosumnes River College

### Dr. Dyrell Foster

Vice President of Student Services at Moreno Valley College

***"All Talk, No Action: How to Foster Real Conversations in Achieving Equity Goals"***

### Thuy Nguyen

Interim General Counsel, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

***"Equal Employment Opportunity and Faculty Diversity"***

### Kimberly Papillon

National Judicial College; nationally-recognized expert on the subject of decision making in law, education, business and medicine

***"The Neuro-Science of Decision Making In Education: Increasing Accuracy, Efficiency and Impartiality"***

Attendees satisfied the diversity requirements set by the state of California to enable them to be on hiring committees for new faculty and staff at their institutions. Many guests stayed after the event to tour America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College.



Dr. Edward Bush



Dr. Dyrell Foster



Thuy Nguyen



Kimberly Papillon

## Condors Soared to the State Soccer Championship

The Oxnard College Condors Men's Varsity Soccer Team was recognized by the Board of Trustees during the January board meeting for winning the 2015 California Community College Athletic Association Soccer Championship – the first in the 40-year history of Oxnard College. The players filled the boardroom sporting their condor blues to receive certificates of achievement for their team victory. Special recognition was given to Head Coach Ross Greaney National Soccer Coaches Association of America Junior College Division III 2015 Coach of the Year and Eduardo (Lalo) Garcia 2015 Player of the Year; and Gustavo Navarro was honored as Western State Conference (WSC) Player of the Year. Way to go Condors!!!



Oxnard College Men's Varsity Soccer Team and VCCCD Board of Trustees.



Trustee Larry Kennedy (center) congratulates OC Varsity Soccer Team head coach Ross Greaney (left), and Eduardo Garcia (right). Greaney was named Coach of the Year, and Garcia was named Player of the Year for the American Jr. Colleges, division III.

# Ventura College Celebrates “Black History Month and Beyond”

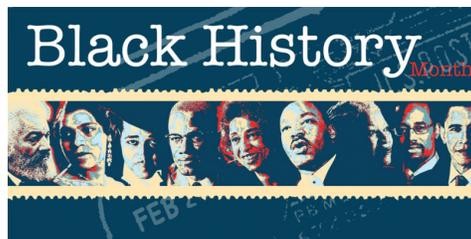
The Ventura College Black Student Union and the Diversity and Culture Committee presented “Black History Month and Beyond,” a celebration that focused on “Connecting the Community to the Campus through Diversity Efforts.”

The event featured Ventura College professor Lawrance Edwards, a practicing attorney. Edwards spoke on the need to assertively pursue diversity efforts on campus. He eloquently addressed the philosophies of old which caused separation and dysfunction in the African American community and strategically blended case law into his speech – delivering a message that would significantly impact the audience.

Members of the Community Advocacy Coalition (CAC) served as panelists for the event. Mrs. Ola Washington, Don Montgomery, and Ross Fontes engaged the audience in critical dialogue. They too stressed the importance of the campus working with the community to help meet the needs of its African American student population.

Attendees included students, faculty, staff, and campus and district leadership. Perry Martin Jr. (CAC’s Interim Executive Director and BSU Advisor) praised those in attendance for their support. CAC will continue to reach out to the VCCCD to make themselves available for any diversity initiatives supporting African Americans and other stakeholders in the community.

“Black History Month and Beyond” was a fitting climax to this year’s Black History Month celebration. The audience gave it great reviews and left inspired to do more to help the school’s diversity efforts.



# VCCCD attracts new employees at Job Fair



On January 30, the District participated in a job fair at the LAX Hilton, focused on community college instructors and administrators. With participation by all three colleges and HR staff, as well as support from our terrific graphics designers Janeene Nagaoka and Dina Pielaeet, we met dozens of prospective faculty members in all disciplines. Our beach theme was a hit, especially contrasted against the suits and formality of other districts. Candidates commented on our enthusiasm for the District, and said we looked like a fun place to work.

## PATHWAYS TO STUDENT SUCCESS

### *Student Trustee Ilse Maymes, a Force to Reckon With*

Student Trustee Ilse Maymes is leaving an indelible and positive mark on the District as she prepares to graduate with an Associate’s degree in Political Science from Ventura College in the fall. Maymes plans to transfer to either California State University, Sacramento, University of California, Irvine, or University of California, Santa Barbara to pursue a Bachelor’s in Political Science, but hasn’t let any grass grow under her feet. She has an active leadership role at the college and the district and has initiated the formation of a District Student Trustee Council that will represent the interests of students at Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura College. The bylaws and operations were discussed in a meeting with Chancellor Bernard Luskin, Vice Chancellor of Educational Services Rick Post, Board of Trustee Chair Larry Kennedy, Board of Trustee Vice Chair Bernardo Perez, and Moorpark, Oxnard, and Ventura college presidents (Luis Sanchez J.D., Dr. James M. Limbaugh, and Dr. Greg Gillespie),



along with representatives of the college’s associated student government leaders, student advisors, and external affairs officers.

All of this was the brainchild of Maymes who wanted a council at the district level to effectively communicate and act upon student issues, discuss legislative issues affecting community colleges, and share student opinions on bills with the Board of Trustees.

The details of the Council are still underway and must go through Board approval.

## Who's Doing What?

# Oxnard College hosts Assembly member Jacqui Irwin *State budget hearing on college readiness*

The District recently hosted Assembly member Jacqui Irwin and the budget Subcommittee on Education Finance at Oxnard College for a candid discussion on college readiness and affordability. Assembly member Kevin McCarty, California Community Colleges Vice Chancellor Pamela D. Walker, committee members, educators, and students gathered to hear and share details about the Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program and the \$60 million grant allocated in the 2015 Budget Act for community colleges to improve remediation practices, a result of legislation authored by Irwin. Community College districts may apply for the grants to adopt or expand programs that offer solutions towards effective skills

assessments, instruction, and ultimately more college graduates.

Oxnard College Marlene Dean, Math Instructor, and Luis Gonzalez, Assistant Dean, spoke on the panel representing Transitional Studies.

After a brief welcome from Chancellor Dr. Bernard Luskin and Oxnard College President Dr. James Limbaugh, Irwin commented on the large number of incoming community college students who test below college-level in math and English (75% or more than 157,000 throughout the California Community Colleges). "The more semesters of remedial courses students are required to take, the less likely they are to complete a college degree," said Irwin.



Assembly member Jacqui Irwin

### *DISTRICT MOVE continued from page 1*

it is expected to close in May 2016 to meet the 90-day turnaround for all inspections, conditions, surveys, and other approvals. The total investment of \$7.5 million using unallocated reserves of \$6,307,024 and remaining 1998 COP proceeds of \$1,192,976 includes: \$5,100,000 purchase price; \$100,000 closing costs; and \$2,300,000 renovation costs. The long-term savings over a period of 20-30 years is estimated at \$2.6 to \$8.0 million, as opposed to remaining in the current lease at Stanley Avenue, which offers no equity or future value.

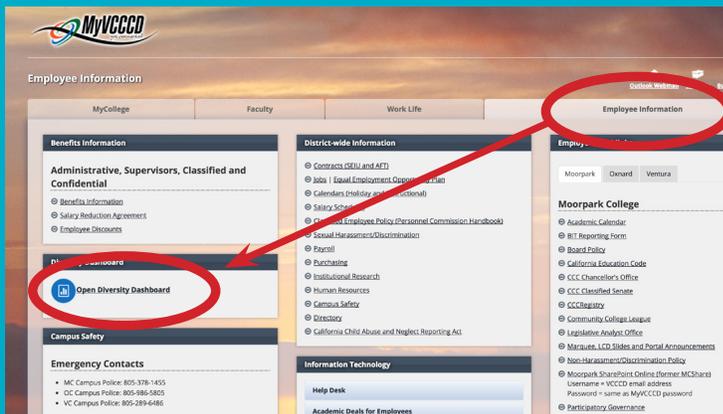
In the short-term, the benefits of the purchase far outweigh the costs. The new building is centrally located, which will allow the District to be more visible and accessible to students, the colleges, and the community. Another advantage is the ability to establish more strategic partnerships through leasing portions of the building to better serve all of our constituents. Talks of a community center and additional classroom space are just a few of the perks the District will inherit as an owner vs. lessee. An architectural firm will be contracted to assist with the design and renovations that will commence during the summer.

## DIVERSITY DASHBOARD *Diversity Casts a Wide Net*

The District's Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee and Human Resources Department have gone beyond the state's standard reporting requirements of accountability and created a tool that allows District employees to monitor diversity in real time for each job category at the colleges and throughout the District. The tool will be updated to include historical data that will enable employees to follow the District's progress in hiring and promoting a diverse staff.

The DIVERSITY DASHBOARD can be accessed on the MyVCCCD portal. Once you've logged in, click on Employee Information and the Diversity Dashboard is located to the left of the screen under Benefits Information. "Signposts help us know where we are on the freeway. This tool will give all of us a real-time look at our progress towards increased diversity," said Michael Shanahan, Vice Chancellor of HR. In the interest of full disclosure and transparency, employees are encouraged to track how well the District

is achieving diversity at all levels based on the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Section 53000 et seq.



Learn more about the EEO Advisory Committee and its activities at [www.vcccd.edu/departments/human-resources/diversity-and-equal-employment-opportunity](http://www.vcccd.edu/departments/human-resources/diversity-and-equal-employment-opportunity)