



December 20, 2022

A Year to be Proud Of

Dear Colleagues,

With the holiday season upon us and a new year around the corner, it is an opportune time to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. This year was not an easy one, with rapidly rising costs of living and shifting public health conditions. Yet, through it all we had great success and remained committed to our students.

Because of you, the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District is continuing to expand opportunities for students across East County and beyond. As we rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic, our District disbursed more than \$20 million in emergency financial aid to nearly 20,000 students and forgave more than \$1.3 million in student debt, assisting more than 5,000 students. Our District also awarded thousands of degrees and certificates of completion, enabling students to enter the workforce or transfer to continue their education, and contributed more than \$1 billion to the local economy.

You also played a pivotal role in reversing a five-year trend of declining student enrollment, which is continuing to trend in the right direction for spring. You successfully shifted hundreds of classes and programs back to in-person learning. You guided our student-athletes to soar both in their sports and academics, and ensured that our visual and performing arts returned in full force.

Grossmont College retained its standing as the nation's No. 1 transfer school to San Diego State University and earned a spot on Hispanic Outlook on Education magazine's list of leading Latinx-serving colleges across the United States. Grossmont secured a \$1.16-million TRIO Educational Opportunity Grant to reach even more students from low-income households, as well as military veterans, adult learners, and first-generation college students. Grossmont College celebrated six decades of service to the community with an event that attracted hundreds of students, alumni, elected officials, and area residents, and had its accreditation status fully reaffirmed by the ACCJC.

Cuyamaca College proudly opened the Together We Rise Student Center, a hub for services including peer mentoring, counseling, study areas and free immigration services for our Latinx community. The college opened a stunning new three-story Student Services Building funded by the voter-approved Proposition V bond measure. Cuyamaca College was named a top college for veterans, maintained its Hispanic Serving Institution status, and - as part of its unique Kumeyaay Studies program - is constructing a replica village on the campus to highlight and learn about the tribe's historic connection to the land.

For the first time since 2019, both colleges held on-campus commencement ceremonies to honor the accomplishments of our students who have endured so much, amidst thousands who proudly cheered on our graduates.

With the momentum we've built this year, I'm excited to continue our success in 2023. Some noteworthy planning items on the horizon include:

- Conducting a review of the District's participatory governance structure through the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative. An external team will visit in the spring, and provide recommendations, with the goal of developing a more effective structure.
- Eliminating roadblocks facing students trying to apply and register for classes.
- Moving up the fall student registration period from late June to early May, to better align with other local colleges and allow students to register for fall before they leave for summer.
- Transitioning from an 18-week to 16-week compressed calendar beginning in fall.
- Implementing a curriculum management system to streamline the curriculum approval process.

Thank you for your commitment to serving our students, for taking pride in your work, and for rising to the challenges as we transitioned back to on-campus operations after enduring the deadliest pandemic in more than a century.

Thank you for being part of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District team. *One District, two colleges, better together!*

There is a quote by Helen Keller that I find particularly meaningful this season:

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart...

Wishing you peace, health, and happiness in the New Year.

Lynn

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