

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

APRIL 2023

**Dr. Henry D. Shannon**



VISION STATEMENT  
Chaffey College:  
Improving lives  
through education.

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## A Message from Superintendent/ President Shannon

Dear Chaffey College and Community Members,

It is officially "go time" in the academic world as we approach the end of the school year and prepare for finals and our commencement celebrations. I know many of us share a sense of excitement and urgency that this season brings, and I encourage all of us to embrace this good energy.

The flurry of graduation-related activities has already begun at Chaffey College and there are many more to look forward to – all culminating with the main event on Thursday, May 18, 2023 at the Toyota Arena when we host our [106th Commencement Ceremony](#).

We recently announced our commencement speaker, Dr. Theresa Price, who is the CEO and Founder of the National College Resources Foundation. Her dedication to expanding college access and resources to vulnerable communities is truly inspiring. I look forward to hearing her speak when we celebrate our graduates in just a few weeks.

Chaffey College continues to draw attention from the nation's most influential leaders. On April 17 Bill Gates and his Foundation visited with our Governing Board, faculty, staff and students to learn about our programs and see first-hand how we are working to streamline college to career pathways. I am grateful to Mr. Gates for stopping by our Rancho Cucamonga campus on his Southern California tour.

In this newsletter you will learn about a Rancho Cucamonga High School student who will earn six degrees and certificates from Chaffey College in May, Chaffey's Professor of Journalism, Michelle Dowd, who has received media attention for her latest book, and our own Strategic Communications Office which won several awards from the Community College Public Relations Organization.

There are many more success stories coming out of our Chaffey community at this time of year and for that, I remain immensely proud of our college.

Let us finish the school year strong!

Sincerely,



Henry D. Shannon, Ph.D.  
Superintendent/President

# Henry Shannon Receives State Public Relations Award

The Community Colleges Public Relations Organization (CCPRO) has named Chaffey College Superintendent/President [Henry Shannon](#) the 2023 winner of the PROMoter Award for championing public relations and marketing initiatives.

Shannon accepted the award on April 13 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel in Universal City. The Chaffey College Strategic Communications Department also received six awards during the ceremony for its work.

"I am honored and grateful to CCPRO for recognizing me for my role in promoting community college education," Shannon said. "I consider it a moral imperative to help every student we can to succeed in their academic and career goals and supporting our talented strategic communications team is one of the ways we do this."

Shannon, who has served in higher education leadership roles for more than 40 years, came to Chaffey College in 2007. Under his leadership, the college has been named a [top 10 college](#) in the nation by the Aspen Institute. Shannon [received](#) the Marie Y. Martin Chief Executive Office Award from the Association of Community

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## Bill Gates Visits Chaffey College to Discuss Higher Ed Initiatives

Bill Gates visited Chaffey College to explore the state and region's efforts to streamline college pathways benefitting California students.

During the three-hour visit, Gates met with leaders including Chaffey College Superintendent/President Henry Shannon, Michelle Decker, president and CEO of the Inland Empire Community Foundation, and Eloy Oakley, former California Community Colleges chancellor and current president and CEO of the [College Futures Foundation](#).

"The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided generous support for numerous statewide initiatives such as [dual enrollment](#) and [Guided Pathways](#), programs that have helped countless students achieve their academic and career goals," Shannon said. "We are grateful to the foundation and Mr. Gates for including Chaffey in the conversation about the future of postsecondary education in California and how we can provide equitable outcomes for our students."

It is the second time the [Gates Foundation](#) has visited Chaffey this year. The team visited Chaffey's [Industrial Technical Learning Center](#) (InTech) in Fontana earlier in the spring to learn about educational initiatives in the region. The team returned because of what it learned at InTech and due to Chaffey's role as a leader in education reform with initiatives such

as [Assembly Bill 705](#), a law that grants most college students immediate access to college-level math and English without remedial coursework.

Gates and the foundation chatted with leaders about approaches to enact large-scale change throughout the state that put students and their journeys at the center of educational systems alignment. He sought information about how existing statewide initiatives designed to streamline pathways from high school to college and careers have been implemented by colleges in partnership with K-12 districts.

He met with students and observed a demonstration by Chaffey College students in the [cybersecurity program](#), heard about Chaffey's dual enrollment partnerships with area school districts and learned about Chaffey's digital credentialing system [ACES \(Academic Community Employability Skills\)](#).

Associate Professor of Computer Information Systems David Nimri said Gates' first words about the cybersecurity program were "This is impressive."

"In many ways this was almost like a dream come true where one of the most preeminent folks in information technology who changed the industry came here to talk to us, meet our students and assess our program," Nimri said.



# Hundreds Celebrate 140th Anniversary in Chino, Fontana



Community members gathered for tacos, ice cream, music and prize giveaways at the Chino and Fontana 140th anniversary celebrations in March.

The pair of events followed the "Family Day" celebration at the Rancho Cucamonga campus.

The Chino campus' March 23 celebration occurred one day shy of the 15th anniversary of the Main Instructional Building opening, said Chino Campus Dean Teresa Hull. The event kicked off with a bistro lunch for area dignitaries, featuring the cuisine of Chaffey's culinary arts students.

"As the dean of the Chino campus, I have had the privilege over the last 16 years to witness the growth of our campus and the impact it has had on this community," said Chino Campus Dean Teresa Hull.

The Chino celebration occurred in sight of construction for the new instructional building, which is slated for completion in May 2024.

Chino Councilman Curtis Burton spoke about his time as a Chaffey College student and hearing about Chaffey's construction of a Chino campus when he worked as a police officer in the city.

"This was a bunch of dairies and a prison down here and look what we have today," he said.

Campus visitors tried out the nursing program's new virtual reality equipment, viewed fashion design creations and checked out robotic equipment from the Industrial Technical Learning Center.

In Fontana, Dean Amy Nevarez shared with visitors news about the physical therapy assistant program – the campus' first exclusive program that will launch in May 2024.

"The number of physical therapy assistant positions available in our region is expected to grow by 24 percent over the next five years," Nevarez said. "These are good paying jobs with an annual salary that reach more than \$77,000 per year."

Michael Townsend, senior district representative for Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes, congratulated Chaffey for having the foresight to meet the growing needs of the region.

"Chaffey has been such a wonderful partner to the city of Fontana and surrounding communities," Townsend said.

# Chaffey College Theatre Presents "The Velveteen Rabbit"

The classic children's story "The Velveteen Rabbit" has appeared as a musical, a television show and in movies. But Chaffey College brought a unique version of the play to the stage in April, approaching it as a "reader's theater" production to give students a chance to show off their voiceover skills.

It's a play Professor of Theater and Director Kelly Ford-Kaminski considers perfect for families.

"My goal was to create something for every age to come and watch," she said.

The story – written by Margery Williams in 1921 – follows the adventures of the Velveteen Rabbit, a stuffed animal given as a Christmas present to a boy. Ford says the play's themes of "becoming real" and unconditional love are needed in a world dominated by social media and unrealistic expectations of image. It also draws other parallels to current times – Williams' book was written in the wake of the 1918 Spanish Flu, which killed millions of people across the globe.

Voiceover work became a way of life in Ford's classes amid COVID-19, when professors were forced to move instruction online.

"Part of our role as actors is voiceover work," she said. "So I started to add more voiceover work and lessons into the actual course, and we started working on character voices."

"The Velveteen Rabbit" play is usually staged where the actors also speak, but this will be a rare occasion where the actors will have off-stage doubles, voicing the characters' roles. The cast includes 41 students.

Theater major Jennifer Flores, who plays the character called "The Skin Horse," says the message behind the play resonates with her.

# Professor's Assignment Grows Into Book Deal



When Professor of Journalism Michelle Dowd tasked her students in 2020 with seeing who could receive the most rejection letters from publishing houses, she took on the same assignment.

But the letters she received were definitely not rejections.

Dowd has since had a [column](#) appear in the New York Times, which led to the publishing of her book "[Forager: Field Notes for Surviving a Family Cult: a Memoir](#)," and talks for movie and television deals.

"It's been emotional since the book came out," Dowd said. "I just didn't realize how public the process is once a book is published."

Dowd, 2022 faculty lecturer of the year and advisor for "The Breeze" student newspaper, shared the story of growing up in an apocalyptic cult in the Angeles National Forest in "Forager." Her grandfather was the leader of the Field cult, and made his family travel the country to talk to people about the apocalypse and the Second Coming. It's a story of how she survived years of abuse, poverty and isolation by drawing on the gifts of the wilderness.

Amid the pandemic, Dowd wanted to show her students the competitive nature of the publishing industry, so she had them write query letters for written work.

"Ever since I started teaching, I've had a policy to always do the assignments that I assign to my students," she said.

Dowd submitted the story of her childhood to the New York Times and immediately got accepted. The column led to calls from book agents and publishers.

"I sold the book from a proposal," she said. "After acquisition, I wrote the whole book in four months while I was teaching."

It's actually her second attempt to publish the story. She wrote another version of the book called "Layaway" when she was 25 years old. She was negotiating a contract with Penguin Books, but later decided she wasn't ready to release it to the world, so she put the manuscript in a closet and didn't write anything else for 25 years.

Dowd had the chance to make peace with her mother before she passed away in 2022. She told her about the upcoming release of "Forager." Her mother doubted that anyone would read it.

The book has been reviewed by the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Salon and Shondaland, among others. She was interviewed by Frank Buckley on KTLA and Megyn Kelly on KABC. She spoke about her book as part of the Wignall Museum's "Reunion" exhibition and "Forager" has been selected as Chaffey's 2023-2024 "One Book, One College" selection. Dowd is also working with a film agent and hopes to co-write the screenplay for the book.

Emily St. Martin, one of Dowd's former students who now writes for the Los Angeles Times, said Dowd always encouraged her students to pursue getting their ideas into the world by pitching agents and sending out queries.

"Watching her practice what she preached and become such a huge success was incredibly motivating," St. Martin said. "She's the proof in the pudding!"

# Top Dual Enrollment Award Earner from Rancho Cucamonga High



A Rancho Cucamonga High School student will earn six degrees and certificates from Chaffey College in May, the most among all dual enrollment students graduating this year.

Thomas Amaya, an aspiring electrical engineer, is also one of the first at his school to earn a high school diploma and college degrees simultaneously.

"I feel very proud of the accomplishments that I have been able to achieve these last four years," Thomas says.

Amaya learned about the dual enrollment program in elementary school through Fontana Campus Dean Amy Nevarez, a family friend. He started his dual enrollment journey as a high school freshman.

Amaya credits Chaffey College Counselor Joe Vallejo with helping him stay on track toward his goals.

"He helped update my educational plan almost every semester to help manage my workload with college and high school," he said.

Vallejo said he has witnessed incredible growth in Amaya since his freshman year.

"I'm excited to see what the future has for this bright, respectful and disciplined young man," he said.

Amaya is a second-generation college student.

# Connect with Us on Social Media



## Chaffey College Governing Board



**Lee C. McDougal**  
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Student Trustee/  
CCSG President

## Serving the communities of:

Chino, Chino Hills, Fontana,  
Montclair, Ontario,  
Rancho Cucamonga, Upland

## Mission Statement

Chaffey College improves lives and our communities through education with a steadfast commitment to equity and innovation to empower our diverse students who learn and thrive through excellent career, transfer, and workforce education programs that advance economic and social mobility for all.

*continued from page 2 - Henry Shannon Receives State Relations Award*

College Trustees in 2018. The college in 2021 received a \$25 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, thanks to Shannon's leadership and support of equity initiatives.

The PROMoter award recognizes community college administrators who demonstrate leadership in supporting public relations and marketing at their college and throughout California.

Shannon has advanced community colleges on a local, state and national level through his work with the Community College League of California, the California Community College Commission of the Future, the American Association of Community Colleges and the Alliance for Education of San Bernardino County, among other organizations.

Chaffey's Strategic Communications team earned the following awards for public relations and marketing projects:

- Gold - manipulated photo
- Silver - feature story
- Silver - wild card
- Silver - novelty advertising
- Silver - annual report
- Bronze - social media marketing



*continued from page 3 - Chaffey Theatre Presents "The Velveteen Rabbit"*

"It says that we can accept you for how you look and how you are," she said.

The play included an opening act of the newly staged "Raven Got it Wrong" - a 2022 poetry and illustration book authored by Charmaine Phipps, a professor of English and English as a Second Language at Chaffey College.

*continued from page 4 - Top Dual Enrollment Award Earner from Rancho Cucamonga High*

His mother went to Chaffey College when Amaya was a baby, eventually earning a Master of Business Administration at the University of La Verne. His father is also a college graduate and his younger brother is a dual enrollment student.

He recommends the dual enrollment program to any high school student looking for a cost-effective way to get a college degree. High school students can take Chaffey dual

enrollment courses tuition-free while taking high school classes.

"It is going to take a lot of hard work and effort if you want to get ahead but it has helped me tremendously and I would recommend it to anyone," he said.

Amaya plans to begin pursuing an engineering degree at the University of California San Diego in the fall.



## Save The Date

**Now through May 11**  
**Student Invitational - Wignall Museum**

**May 5** [Student Invitational Virtual Walk-Through with the Artists](#)

**May 6** [Black/African American Celebration of Graduates](#)

**May 7** [Nuestra Celebration of Graduates](#)

**May 9** [Veterans End of Year Celebration](#)

**May 11** [Lavender Celebration of Graduates](#)

**May 11** Identity and Society: Conversations on experiences and relationships on HS-143 or [Zoom](#)

**May 12** [DocuScholar End of Year Celebration](#)

**May 18** [Commencement](#)