

# PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

MARCH 2024

**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,

Spring is here! I trust that you have adapted to daylight savings time and are enjoying the longer days and warmer weather. This is the time of year when things are kicked into high gear at Chaffey College with the start of our Fast Track II session and packed calendar of events.

March was full of celebratory moments as we commemorated Women's History Month with a panel of inspirational Chaffey women, a preventative healthcare event and a screening of "Barbie." Thank you to the Chaffey women who make our community stronger and futures brighter.

Also in March, we celebrated the hard work and dedication of our classified professionals during Classified Appreciation Week. Our inaugural "Classified Cup" included a tournament series, recognition ceremony and the awarding of the golden trophy to "Team Superstars." Each year we strive to make Classified Appreciation Week special to show our gratitude for the contributions made by so many hard-working individuals. Thank you for all you do for our students!

Hundreds attended a job fair in March on the Rancho Cucamonga campus that was hosted by Chaffey's Business & Entrepreneurship Club. Students and community members got direct access to 30 organizations to learn about potential employment opportunities and resources. I look forward to seeing more of these opportunities hosted at Chaffey in the future!

Up ahead, we are looking forward to welcoming prospective students and families to our Open House events at each of our campuses on April 13, 22, and 25. This is an opportunity to discover Chaffey programs and get to know our vibrant community. [RSVP here.](#)

I always look forward to new productions put on by our Theatre Department. I invite you to come see a contemporary comedic spin on the classic story of Don Juan with "Juanita's Statue" April 11-14. Tickets can be purchased [here.](#)

Another exciting moment in April will be our 2024 Alumni Panel taking place April 11 on the Rancho Cucamonga campus. Come learn what our celebrated and successful alumni are up to - you can [RSVP here.](#)

Go Panthers!

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



## Chaffey Culinary Students Tour Grand Central Market, Broad Museum

Students explored 50 eateries in Los Angeles's Grand Central Market, as well as the Broad Museum, during a February field trip.

The outing exposed students to the parallels between culinary and visual arts, while also giving them a look at career opportunities.

The 22 students who participated interacted with food vendors and chefs, learning about the Market's rich culinary landscape. They received a guided tour by representatives of the award-winning bakery Fat & Flour, and the renowned eatery Bastion, giving students a look into the food industry's creative and operational aspects. Students took the historic Angels Flight railway to the Broad Museum to explore art and its connection with food.

Recent graduates of the culinary arts program have been hired in prestigious and local culinary settings, including Robert Hecht, who was hired in February by the award-winning Los Angeles Michelin Star restaurant Otium. Graduates have also recently found career opportunities with The Cheesecake Factory, summer camps in Vermont and retirement community kitchens, among other locations.

## Job Fair Draws Hundreds of Students

The Rancho Cucamonga campus quad transformed into a space for networking and connection as students explored the Student Job Fair hosted by Chaffey College's Business & Entrepreneurship Club.

More than 200 students attended the event on March 5, eager to connect with potential employers from various companies, organizations and nonprofits.

Gladys Morales, Business & Entrepreneurship Club president, expressed the importance of all college students having access to career opportunities.

"We have established the Business & Entrepreneurship Club to be more resourceful," she said. "We are connecting students to employers, resources and departments on campus."

The event aimed to educate students that employers are willing to accommodate their school schedules to help launch their post-college paths.

"We are trying our best to give students the opportunities that they need to grow," said Morales.

Thirty organizations from the surrounding community including: San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health, Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP), Student Hires, DoubleTree by Hilton and Allied Universal attended.

Lucia Mogan, ACE Program Manager at Vocational Improvement Program Incorporated (VIP Inc.) enjoyed connecting with Chaffey students at the event.

VIP Inc. is a private nonprofit organization that serves persons with disabilities by providing prevocational training, employment opportunities and support services.

"What I've been telling everyone as they stop by is that it's all about discovery and exploration," she said. "Explore as many things as you can until you find your niche."

Looking ahead, the Business & Entrepreneurship Club hopes to host similar events in the future to continue providing opportunities to students.





Cheryl Gomez has fought through workplace sexual harassment, homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness.

Any one of those things could have scared another person away from pursuing a college education.

But Gomez is not one of those people. She's graduating in May with an Associate's Degree in film, television and electronic media, as well as a certificate in screenwriting. Gomez will be one of, if not the oldest, member of the class of 2024.

And she wants to turn her adversities into a story to share with others in movies.

"I'm so excited," she said. "I'm so proud of myself. I'm happy because behind a lot of the pain that I experienced, I got up, brushed myself off and kept going. I kept telling myself, 'I can do this.'"

Gomez, author of the 1993 book "[When No Means No](#)," won a \$1.2 million settlement in a sexual harassment case against the Detroit Police Department in 1987. The former police officer faced racially-charged death threats by fellow officers, and when she complained to her commanding officer, he agreed to help, but only if she slept with him.

## 69-Year-Old Panther Overcomes Adversities, On Track to Graduate

She has since been on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" and "Larry King" as an expert on sexual harassment. She has lectured at Harvard, Yale and Duke Universities on the topic.

But she continued to face challenges despite her victory in court.

Post-traumatic stress disorder haunted her, and alcoholism eventually led her to a rehabilitation center in 2009. When she got out, she found herself without a place to live, so she slept in her car for a while and eventually checked into a women's shelter. "When I laid on a mat that night, I decided to go back to school," she said.

Her routine was simple: go to Starbucks in the morning to wash up in the restroom, and then go to class at Chaffey College.

Gomez said her greatest challenge of returning to school at her age was not interacting with much younger classmates. It was technology.

"Canvas beat my butt," she said. "I'm from the baby-boomer generation, and we are not tech savvy."

She says she enjoys working with younger people in class.

"The kids love me because I share history and stories with them. I get a lot of help from the young adults," she said.

Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies Jose Zamora called Gomez one of his hardest-working students.

"She has overcome a multitude of obstacles to get to where she is now. I believe that she is what we want to see out of our students, and I believe that she deserves to be recognized," he said.

Health issues, pursuing custody of her granddaughter and the death of her father

forced her to put her education on hold several times, but she returned in 2022 for good. She says her entire family and friends plan to see her when she graduates.

Gomez has been working with her daughter, [Reagan Gomez-Preston](#), to develop a screenplay about her life. Gomez-Preston has been a professional actress, writer and producer for 30 years, appearing in shows such as "The Parent 'Hood" and the FOX animated comedy "The Cleveland Show." Gomez says she has been approached for movie rights already. She also plans to continue her education and earn a bachelor's degree in film and screenwriting.

She hopes her story will inspire younger people to work through their own challenges to finish school. She is especially proud as an Afro-Latina to share her success with others.

"I'm showing the younger generations that you're never too old to go after a dream," Gomez said. "Anything is possible."



Cheryl Gomez  
Former Police Officer

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## Chaffey College Governing Board



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## 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.

# Chaffey College to Present "Juanita's Statue"

Chaffey College theatre students will bring to the stage a comedic spin on the classic story of Don Juan in April with the production "Juanita's Statue."

It's a contemporary comedy that contains themes of self-love, gender fluidity and Latino culture, something that resonates with the 40 cast and crew members and the greater Chaffey community, said Theatre Arts Professor Christa Havenhill, play director.

"I felt that it would really engage the students and the audiences since 60 percent of our student population is Latino and we're a Hispanic-Serving Institution. I felt like we needed to dive into the culture of our students so that students, as well as the audience, would be excited about the show," Havenhill said.

The story focuses on Juanita, who disguises herself as a man to escape the wrath of her lover Ignacio's father. Masquerading as the "new" Don Juan, Juanita moves through Los Angeles's historic Olvera Street, and the characters she encounters instantly fall in love with her/him.

Havenhill used Olvera Street as the setting because she felt it fit the playwright, Anne Garcia-Romero's, original intent. It approaches the story with the style of a telenovela, with

characters speaking both English and Spanish lines.

"The main message is that love is primarily found within," Havenhill said. "If you want long-term love, you have to first look inward."

Psychology major Alizé Lopez, playing the role of Juan/Juanita, said she feels connected to the role because of her own background.

The Fontana resident, who graduated from the School of Arts and Enterprise in Pomona, said she struggled with growing up in a traditional Latino family because she identifies as gender fluid.

The message of self-love in the play is the approach she took to working through her own struggles, Lopez said.

"I found peace within myself, so I don't need the outward validation, and that's very similar to Juanita's struggle," she said.

"Juanita's Statue" hits the stage at 7:30 p.m., April 11-13, with the April 12 performance providing American Sign Language interpretation. An additional performance will take place at 2 p.m., April 14. The play contains adult themes.

Tickets are \$10 and available [online](#).



## Save The Date

**April 15 to May 9**  
[Student Invitational](#)  
Wignall Museum

**April 11**  
[The Importance of Pronouns](#)  
Library 7C & Zoom

**April 24**  
[Legal Night](#)  
BE-105

**April 13, 22 & 25**  
[Open House](#)  
Rancho, Fontana & Chino

**April 24**  
[CCC LGBTQ+](#)  
[Summit Watch Party](#)  
AD-191