

## **TRANSITION AND GRATITUDE: MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT/PRESIDENT**

**From:** Rivera-Lacey, Star <[srivalacey@palomar.edu](mailto:srivalacey@palomar.edu)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025 6:41 AM

**To:** Rivera-Lacey, Star <[srivalacey@palomar.edu](mailto:srivalacey@palomar.edu)>

**Subject:** Transition and Gratitude: Message from the Superintendent/President

*Bcc: All employees and all emeritus employees*

Dear Palomar Colleagues,

Since 2021, it has been my sincere honor and privilege to serve as your Superintendent/President. Together, we have strengthened Palomar's position as a premier institution dedicated to expanding opportunities for all students, and I am deeply grateful for what we have accomplished side by side.

Our collective achievements over these past years are both significant and inspiring. We have celebrated multiple consecutive terms of enrollment growth and have engaged in strategic planning for continued expansion. We achieved financial stability, including the removal of a fiscal monitor, the repeal of ACCJC's "at-risk" designation, the early repayment of loans, an improved credit standing, the implementation of FCMAT recommendations, the establishment of Board Policy to increase reserves, and positioned ourselves well to weather any future economic uncertainty.

We navigated a pandemic together, launched a new governance structure, successfully developed the 2035 Education and Facilities Vision Plan, and experienced the most successful accreditation team visit in recent memory. We also secured approval from the State Chancellor's Office for official center status for the Rancho Bernardo Education Center, expanded dual enrollment opportunities (including the opening of a new Middle College), grew our Military Leadership Program, and increased Credit for Prior Learning options. In addition, we expanded workforce and apprenticeship initiatives and received approval for Palomar's first-ever baccalaureate degree program.

We deepened support for justice-impacted students through the Rising Scholars Program and expanded both Basic Needs and mental health resources. We established the Cariño Dream Village (Dreamers Success Program), expanded spaces for Umoja and the Pride Center, hired our inaugural Student Support Program Coordinator for the NSPIRE Program/Native American Resource Center, and launched a planning initiative to develop a program supporting Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. We created the Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Antiracism (including the Chief Diversity Officer position) and broadened efforts to support gender diversity within our campus police department.

We opened the spectacular new softball and football stadiums, secured the construction of the first permanent building at the Fallbrook Education Center, and are witnessing the new athletic fieldhouse become a reality.

Equally important, we have worked collaboratively with our union partners over the years to improve working conditions and, in turn, strengthen student learning conditions by advancing initiatives such as part-time parity and the implementation of various equitable work policies. These efforts reflect our shared commitment to the employees who make Palomar such a special place.

These accomplishments are a testament to what can be achieved when we come together in service to our students and our community #TeamPalomar. It has truly been an honor to lead this dedicated team of educators and professionals.

As of November 30, 2025, I will be concluding my time as Superintendent/President to begin a new professional chapter as the first Deputy Chancellor/Provost at the Riverside Community College District. In the coming weeks, the Governing Board will begin the process of selecting the next Superintendent/President and will share more information with the campus community.

I want to thank each of you for your unwavering dedication, collaboration, and care for our students and for one another. It is my deepest hope that Palomar College continues to shine as a model of excellence, innovation, and equity, remaining steadfast in its mission to empower students and transform lives.

*Go Comets!*

**Star Rivera-Lacey, Ph.D.** | Superintendent/President  
Palomar Community College District