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June 6, 2025

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

A Time To Celebrate!

Just prior to our Commencement Ceremony on May 23, we received our last and official approval for our Bachelor of Science in Building Performance and Environmental Design degree from the California Community College Board of Governors. Our fabulous team of faculty and administrators are now finalizing all of the details so that we can accept our first applicants in late fall or early spring 2026, with students taking their first set of classes in fall 2026.

It is always an honor to preside over our Commencement Ceremony, but having it in our brand new Comet Football stadium made it extra special. Over 728 graduates walked across the stage and thousands of friends and family members celebrated the success of their students. We conferred over 4,500 degrees and certificates to more than 2,900 students, including 29 Rising Scholars and 21 Bonsall High School students who attended the Early College program at the Fallbrook Education Center.

The 2025 Ceremony could not have been possible without the dedication of our planning committee with members of our professional staff, faculty and administrators. It was a great day to be a Comet!

Year-End Celebrations

Leading up to the day of Commencement, our talented and dedicated employees hosted over 20 events to celebrate student success. Our students and their families felt valued and supported by Palomar College as they were recognized for their



2025 Commencement Ceremony at the Comet Football stadium on May 23, 2025.



Superintendent/ President Emeritus Dr. George Boggs, Superintendent/President Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey, Trustee Dr. Judy Patacsil, Secretary Yvette Marie Acosta, Vice President Dr. Holly Hamilton-Bleakley, President Jacqueline Kaiser, and Trustee Roberto Rodriguez.

achievements. The celebrations started with the EOPS/TRiO/Promise/Rising Scholar/Dreamer Success Recognition Dinner held at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido. The Asian Pacific Alliance in Education Achievement celebration, Mahafali – a celebration of Black Student Achievement, and the La Raza Scholars celebration were also held.



Governing Board Trustee Roberto Rodriguez and Governing Board Secretary Yvette Marie Acosta at the EOPS, Promise, Trio Rising Scholars, and Dreamers Success Recognition Dinner.



Puente students celebrating their achievements at the year-end celebration.





Fashion Design students celebrating their creations at the MODA Fashion 2025 show.



Taneisha Hellon, Umoja/Black Student Success Counselor and Palomar College graduate at the Umoja Rights of Passage event.



Service Learning award winners and their supportive Palomar College team.

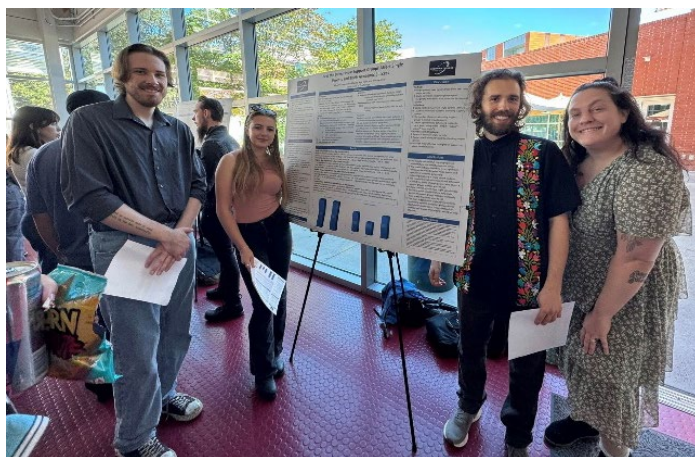




Governing Board Vice President Dr. Holly Hamilton-Bleakley visiting with Architecture Design student.



Palomar College Athletics Department Commencement Barbeque



Students participating in the Research Methods Poster Fair in the Student Union.





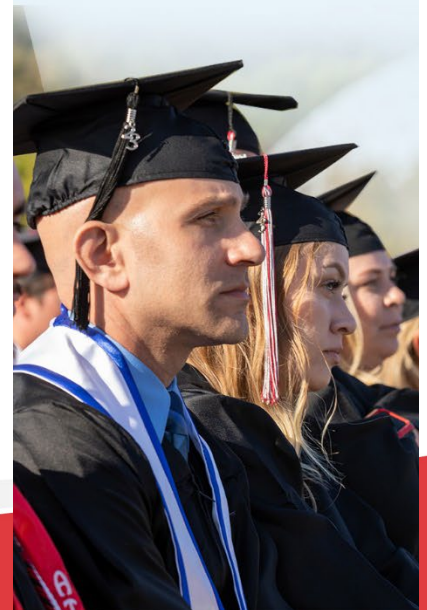
Palomar College Nursing Pinning Ceremony



Vice President of Student Services Nick Mata, Palomar College DRC Student Nicholas Fox, and Service Dog Phoebe at the year-end



Graduates of the Palomar College 67th Fire Fighter Academy I.



Annual Employee Celebration

Second to Commencement, our annual employee celebration is likely the favorite event of the academic year. It is a perfect opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of all of our employees. It gives us a moment to recognize and celebrate our commitment to the success of Palomar College by honoring retirees, years of service, faculty and union members, and annual awards in a variety of categories.



Vice President of Instruction Dr. Tina Recalde, Superintendent/President Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey, Annual Teamwork Award winners Professors Joseph Lucido and Jessica Newman, Dean of Instruction Dr. Jenny Fererro, and Trustee Roberto Rodriguez

Congratulations to Vice President Dr. Tina Recalde

Dr. Tina Recalde, Assistant Superintendent/Vice President of Instruction at Palomar College, has been selected to join the third annual cohort of California Community College leaders for the Wheelhouse Advancing Leaders Institute. Dr. Recalde is among 28 equity-minded vice presidents, vice chancellors, and other senior leaders from across the state representing colleges and districts that collectively serve over 600,000 students statewide. The Wheelhouse convenes two leadership development institutes each year. Both are designed to strengthen leadership and practice in the California Community Colleges, which is essential to the success of the California economy and to the state's culture of broad opportunity for a diverse population.

Strengthening Strategic Partnerships

Governing Board Vice President Dr. Holly Hamilton-Bleakely attended the Ramona Unified School District Board Meeting as they unanimously approved the California College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) agreement with Palomar College. In early May, she had a follow-up visit with Ramona Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Brian Thurman, and



Assistant Superintendent Leslie Wilson to discuss the process of establishing dual enrollment programs and they expressed their gratitude and praise of Palomar College and are very excited about this new opportunity for Ramona High School students.

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTION

The month of May is a special time to celebrate the accomplishments of our students as they complete their classes, graduate, and move on to the next steps in their journey. It has been an honor to hear about and witness their successes at events including the Puente Celebration, EOPS/TRIO/Promise/Rising Scholar/Dreamer Success Recognition, Phi Theta Kappa Induction, MODA Fashion Show, Design Program Showcase (Architecture, Fashion, and Cabinet and Furniture Design), Psychology Research Methods Student Poster Fair, APAHE Achievement Celebration, Nursing Pinning Ceremony, and Commencement. It is also a time to honor our employees and their contributions to the successes of our students at events such as the Employee Recognition Event. Palomar College is a special place full of amazing people who create opportunities for students to thrive.

The Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) team attended the final convening and coaches for each team shared some thoughts about how each team performed over the course of the year. Palomar College coaches Paul Murphy and James Lancaster said the following about Palomar's team:

Palomar College takes home the "Divide and Conquer" award for their super-organized, tri-force approach to strategic enrollment management! Like a well-coordinated superhero team, they tackled scheduling from three powerful angles: mastering scheduling parameters, block scheduling, and creating a scheduling planning template. But that's not all! Palomar didn't just work in silos; they unleashed a campus-wide communications plan, sharing their victories and gathering crucial intel from their fellow Comets. For their ability to break down a big challenge into conquerable pieces and keep the college in the loop, Palomar College, we salute you!

We received notification that our Bachelor of Science in Building Performance and Environmental Design (BSBPED) has been approved by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the California Community College Board of Governors. Implementation efforts are ongoing in Instruction, Student Services, and Fiscal & Administrative Services and we look forward to welcoming our first cohort of upper-division students in Fall 2026. We are so appreciative of professors Joe Lucido and Jessica Newman for their creativity, innovation, and dedication in bringing this degree to our students.

Professional Development (PD) supports our Classified Professionals and CAST employees by providing logistics and PD support for painting, bead work, Arboretum tours, and Planetarium shows. PD is honored to support our Classified colleagues and to be part of



Ramona Unified School District Assistant Superintendent Leslie Wilson, Governing Board Vice President Dr. Holly Hamilton-Bleakley and Ramona Unified School District Superintendent Dr. Brian Thurman

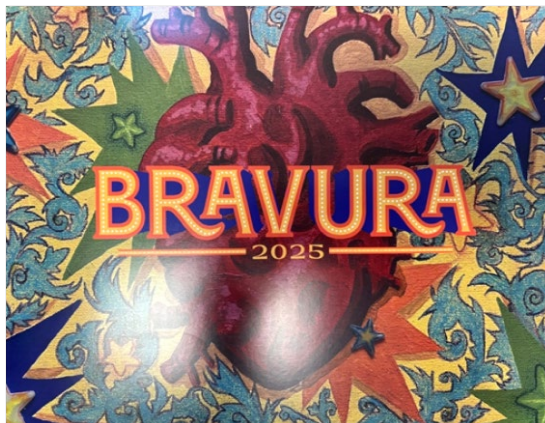


Classified Appreciation Week (honoring what is officially recognized during commencement week).

Languages and Literature Division

The Speech and Debate Team held their Spring Showcase on May 1. During the academic year, students competed in ten tournaments, and several award winners performed their speeches at the event, including Dia Hill (Informative), Natalie Schmoke (Prose Interpretation), Rachael Shepart (Extemporaneous), and Kat Caldwell (Impromptu). Max Hutchins, Alyssa Olaes, and Tanner Mejia also presented their Interpreters Theater piece, *The Ladder*, directed by Professor Jordan Kay, who received a director's award. Kat Caldwell, national champion in Impromptu and International Parliamentary Debate, also performed at the May 13 Governing Board meeting.

This spring, the English department released the 61st edition of *Bravura*, its annual literary magazine, celebrating student creativity in poetry, prose, and visual art. The magazine also features contributions from local high school students. The release was marked by a festive gala on May 16 at the Clocktower lawn.



Cover of the 61st edition of *Bravura*

The English as a Second Language (ESL) department successfully completed its rebranding initiative. The project features artwork from the student poster competition.



ESL students proudly display their winning poster design as part of the rebranding initiative for the ESL department.



The new ESL Department poster designed by students.



The ESL program continues to grow and reach new milestones. We are thrilled to announce the expansion of our multi-site initiative to Farr Avenue Elementary School and to launch our first vocational ESL course for Medical Fields this Fall. This course is designed to open new pathways for students pursuing careers in healthcare. In addition, Level 3 students in the ESL program at the Escondido Education Center recently showcased their creativity through haikus and original artwork in Professor Heayoung Mikas' class. Inspired by their hometowns, their poetry and visual art were displayed in the library at the Escondido Education Center.



Student-produced Haikus and original artwork are on display at the library at the Escondido Education Center.

Congratulations are due to ESL Professors Nimoli Madan, Tracy Fung, and Tina-Marie Parker who earned Peer Online Course Review (POCR) badges for their courses. We appreciate their dedication to quality online teaching.

Azucena Hernández, a student from our Fallbrook Education Center, received a Service Learning Award, while Sheri Cully, an ESL professor was honored as the inaugural Outstanding Service Learning Professor of the Year.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) Division

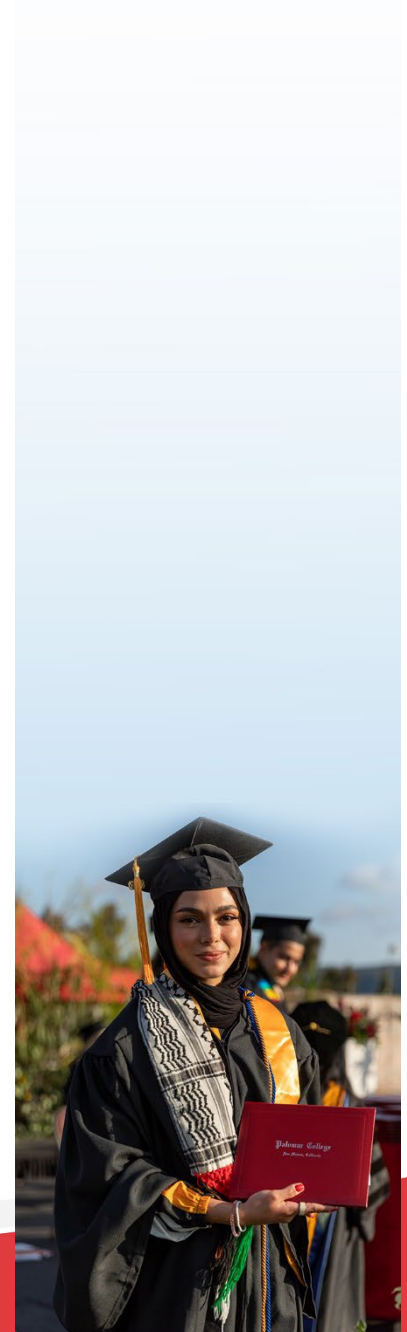
This semester, the Economics, History and Political Science department hosted its signature event, Political Economy Days—a two-day conference filled with dynamic, well-attended sessions open to students and the broader community. Scholars from Palomar College and neighboring universities shared insights on topics spanning economics, history, and political science. Held each fall and spring, this event fosters public engagement and promotes thoughtful academic dialogue. The department also participated in the Palomar College LGBTQ+ Pride Festival, where faculty and students hosted an interactive educational game celebrating lesser-known LGBTQ+ historical figures, blending fun with learning and inclusivity.

Professor Paul Park recently earned his Ph.D. in Economics from Florida State University. His dissertation explores critical issues including environmental externalities and child health, higher education funding policies, and the tax implications of educational outcomes.



Sixteen students earned their Child Development School Age Assistant Certificates through the Escondido Union School District Palomar College Paraeducator Partnership (P3) Program this spring.

At the end of the semester, 16 students from the Escondido Union



School District Palomar College Paraeducator Partnership (P3) Program earned their Child Development School Age Assistant Certificates. These students are now able to enter the child development field, which is currently seeking qualified applicants.

Math, Science and Engineering (MSE) Division

Avery Laws, one of our outstanding geology majors, has been awarded a prestigious National Undergraduate Scholarship from the American Institute of Professional Geologists (AIPG). This highly competitive scholarship awards between \$1,000-\$3,000 to only 10-20 undergraduate students across the United States each year. What makes Avery's achievement especially remarkable is that these scholarships are typically awarded to students from top-tier geology programs at 4-year institutions. It is rare for a student from a community college to be recognized at this level, making Avery's accomplishment a proud milestone for Palomar College.



Palomar College Professor Sean Figgs and student Avery Laws

Arts, Media, Business Administration Division

Palomar Performing Arts presented *Bad Hombres, Good Wives*, a bold, dark comedy by Culture Clash co-founder Herbert Siguenza. This high-energy adaptation of Molière's *School for Wives* is set in 1992 Sinaloa and blends narco-novela drama with farcical humor, music, and dance. Directed by Michael Mufson and Alejandro Moreno, the show features banda songs, cumbia dancing, and hilarious stage combat. A special Q&A with the playwright followed the May 9 performance. On May 15, the Pride Center held their final Queer Film Series event of the semester with a free screening of *Mosquita y Mari* (2012), followed by a Q&A with writer/director Aurora Guerrero.

Career Technical and Extended Education Division

The annual Service-Learning Awards reception was hosted on May 15. The event celebrated the achievements and impact of student engagement in community service. During the event, four outstanding students were honored with a Service-Learning Award, which included a \$250 prize, a Certificate of Achievement, and a graduation stole embroidered with the Service-Learning emblem. These awards recognized their exceptional dedication to civic engagement. English as a Second Language Professor Sheri Cully received the Outstanding Service-Learning Faculty of the Year Award for her exemplary leadership and commitment to the program. She is one of 29 faculty members who integrate this impactful, work-based learning experience into their courses during the academic year. The Service-Learning Program continues to thrive, with over 380 students contributing more than 10,000 hours of service to the community this year.

On May 16, the Palomar College Fire Academy 67 graduated 38 students at a ceremony and demonstration held at the Public Safety Training Center at Santar Place in San Marcos. The ceremony is held with partners from local fire agencies. The academy benefits from their



support, equipment, and instructors throughout the academic year. The 650-hour, semester-long program runs twice a year and equips students with essential skills and certifications for fire service careers. This program is well-regarded, with an estimated 70–80% of graduates securing employment within a year or after completing paramedic training.

Dual Enrollment

Poway Unified School District (PUSD) held its annual CTE Expo at Hewlett-Packard.

The new Superintendent, Dr. Brian Churchill, invited PUSD Partners in Education, including Palomar College, and held a brief opening ceremony with representatives from State and local legislative offices.



A firefighting demonstration held during the Fire Academy 67 completion ceremony

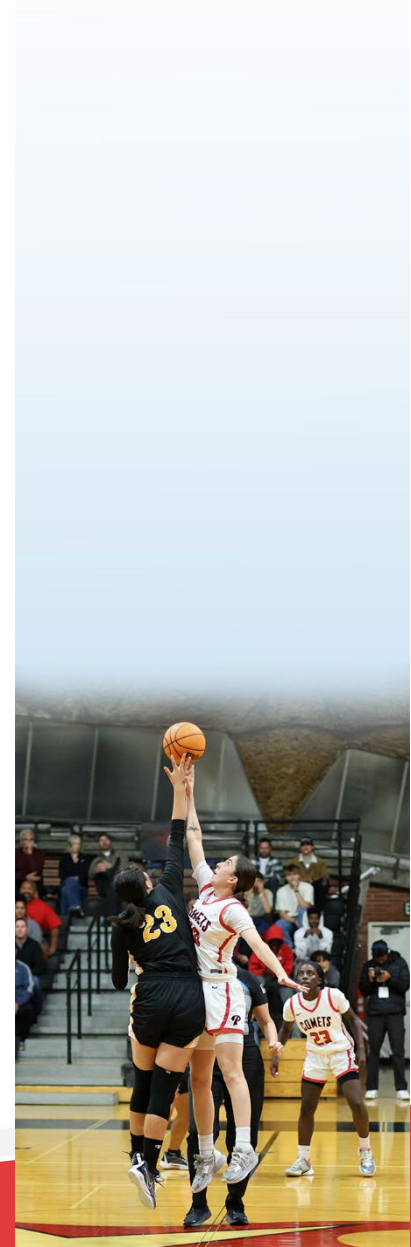
Bonsall High School Early College received the *Achieve Award* from the Classroom of the Future Foundation. Bonsall strives to ensure all students have equitable access to an elevated level of learning by providing students from all backgrounds with the opportunity to take college courses at Palomar College while in high school. Palomar College joined Bonsall High School Early College at the Innovation in Education Awards ceremony on May 15th.



Interim Dean of Dual Enrollment Dr. Glyn Bongolan, Palomar College representatives and Bonsall Unified School District at the Innovation in Education Awards Ceremony.

Rancho Bernardo Education Center

Rancho Bernardo Education Center recently hosted the final critiques for the Architecture Design program, providing a dynamic platform for students to present their culminating



projects. In addition, the Fashion Merchandising and Design program held its annual MODA Fashion Show at the Center for the Performing Arts in Escondido. The event showcased student creativity and innovation.

Forty-four graduates from the Poway to Palomar Middle College (PPMC) Middle College High School program were celebrated during a ceremony held on May 30. The event marked a proud moment for students, families, and faculty.

STUDENT SERVICES

Office of Student Recruitment

The Office of Student Recruitment hosted 390 students for campus tours, conducted presentations, and attended events impacting 2,030 students in April. An in-person student orientation will be held on June 6 to welcome new students to Palomar. In collaboration with administrators, faculty, and staff, Palomar College hosted booths at the Fallbrook Avocado Festival and Vista Strawberry Festival to connect with our community members.

TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS) and TRIO North County Educational Opportunity Center (NCEOC)

Throughout the month of May, the TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS) and TRIO North County Educational Opportunity Center (NCEOC) have been actively engaged in both student-centered and partner events supporting current participants and celebrating year-end accomplishments. TRIO ETS was proud to support the grand opening of the Project Next Future Center at Escondido High School, celebrate the ETS Class of 2025 at Orange Glen High School, and participate in the Migrant Education Resource Fair. TRIO NCEOC participated in the Fallbrook Education Center Resource Fair to share program services with Palomar College students and the local community. The team also supported the Palomar College LGBTQ+ Pride Festival. Additionally, NCEOC successfully submitted the 2023–2024 Annual Performance Report (APR) and met all program objectives in the areas of participants served, financial aid assistance, postsecondary enrollment, and admissions.

Rising Scholars Program

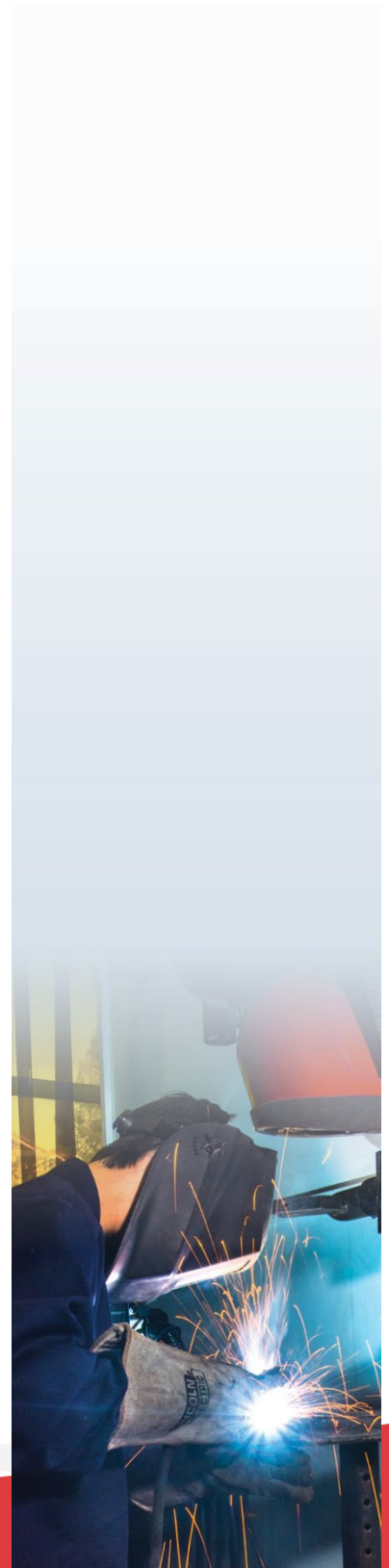
The Rising Scholars program is celebrating 29 graduates this year. This is the most graduates since the start of the program.

Systems, Technology, and Projects

During May, Student Services Systems, Technology, and Projects completed numerous projects to include upgrades and updates to the SARS Server for the Counseling Appointment System, established a webpage for student services and support summer office hours, and updated the Student Services Guide webpage. To assist in planning for the 2025 Commencement Ceremony, the team facilitated text messaging campaigns to best receive confirmation of attendance from graduates. We also coordinated a streaming link on the commencement webpage for live and recorded videos. Email notifications were sent to students regarding the La Raza Scholars, Mahafali, and APAHE celebrations.

2025 Migrant Education Regional Parent Conference

On May 17, Palomar College welcomed families attending the San Diego County Office of Education's Migrant Education Parent Conference. This special event offered parents of migratory children valuable resources and tools to support their children's academic, personal, and emotional development. Attendees participated in a variety of expert-led workshops covering topics such as education, mental health, public health, cybersecurity, and



financial literacy. In addition to the educational sessions, families had access to complimentary health, vision, and dental screenings. The event also featured informational booths from local nonprofits, community organizations, and businesses. With more than 200 parents and children in attendance, the conference was a meaningful day of learning, connection, and support for the community.



Attendees of the Migrant Education Regional Parent Conference interacting with information booths.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Fiscal Services

A special congratulations to Classified Employee of the Year Ping Lee, who serves as an Accountant in Fiscal Services.

Facilities Department

Construction & Facilities Planning

The department successfully completed and submitted the annual 5-Year Capital Outlay Plan to the California Community College Chancellor's Office, outlining Palomar's long-range facility development priorities. Highlighting Palomar College for our leadership in sustainability, the California Climate Fellows workshop was hosted at the San Marcos campus on June 4. Attendees included the Chancellor of the California Community College system.

Significant progress was also made on active construction projects: utility infrastructure and access road development continued for the Fallbrook 40 project, while the Athletics Phase 2 project advanced with site utility work and temporary shoring for a new retaining wall.

Environmental Health & Safety/Risk Management (EH&S/RM)

EH&S continued to strengthen campus safety and compliance through a variety of initiatives. Training sessions were provided for the Math, Science and Engineering Instructional Support Specialists (ISS) to familiarize them with the new Safety Data Sheet (SDS) database, and a comprehensive user guide was distributed to all district employees working with chemicals. Fire extinguisher inspections were completed at both the Escondido and the Rancho Bernardo Education Centers. In addition, EH&S staff conducted a total of 10 safety-related activities—including inspections, ergonomic assessments, consultations, installations, and deliveries—across the San Marcos campus. Lastly, separators and clarifiers were pumped out at the C building, Comet Copy, and the T/ITC building to ensure environmental compliance.



and proper maintenance of waste systems.

Custodial Services

Custodial staff remained highly engaged in supporting a wide range of campus events during one of the busiest times of the year. Notable events included the Bravura Annual Gala, UMOJA Rites of Passage, Migrant Education Regional Parent Conference, and the Nursing Pinning Ceremony, among many others. The team continues to ensure all campus locations are clean, sanitized, and well-maintained, with proper waste disposal, providing essential support for both daily operations and special events.

Facilities Maintenance

Maintenance staff completed several key projects this month to improve campus functionality and support operational needs. A subfloor and double doors were installed in Room D-12 to combine two classrooms into a unified instructional space. Two HVAC split units were replaced—one in the TLC IDF room and another in the telephone room—to maintain proper environmental conditions and equipment reliability. A single-use restroom was installed in the former Campus Police building, which is being repurposed as the future Basic Needs Center. Additionally, new landscaping was completed along Mission Road and Lot 5, enhancing campus aesthetics and contributing to ongoing beautification efforts.

We are proud to celebrate the remarkable achievements of several team members who were recently honored with nominations and awards at the Annual Employee Celebration and by the Council of Classified Employees (CCE). These individuals exemplify dedication, leadership, and a strong commitment to service—both on campus and in the broader community.

Andrew Vega, Custodian II, was named CCE Unionist of the Year. This award recognizes individuals who demonstrate a deep commitment to advancing the mission of CCE through organizing efforts, promoting solidarity, and leading initiatives that support improved working conditions, social and educational justice, and climate action. Andrew's leadership and advocacy have had a meaningful impact on our campus community and beyond.

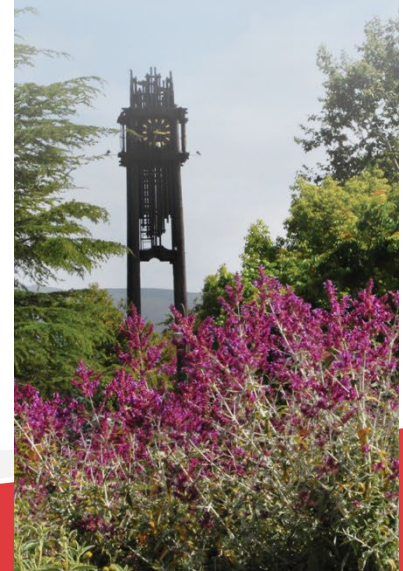
Stephanie Roman, Out-of-Class Custodial Supervisor, was awarded CAST Employee of the Year for her outstanding contributions to Palomar. Stephanie's leadership, initiative, and strong support of her team have made a significant difference in daily operations and event readiness across campus.

Sasha Craig, Custodian I, was nominated for CCE Community Champion, an honor reserved for those who lead through service, community involvement, and organizing efforts beyond their regular duties. Sasha's commitment to outreach and community engagement truly reflects the values of this award.

Additionally, we proudly recognize *Custodian I* team members Nick Cagala, Cindy Davalos, and Juan Suarez Ledesma, who were nominated for Classified Employee of the Year. These nominations reflect the high regard their colleagues have for their hard work, reliability, and dedication to the college. Congratulations to all our nominees and award recipients. Your efforts inspire all of us and exemplify the excellence and commitment that define the Facilities department.

HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES (HRS)

The Human Resource team participated in the Business Pathway Career Fair on campus. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with students who are focusing their studies on pursuing a degree in the field of business.



Assistant Superintendent/Vice President Pedroza and Director Winterle attended the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) conference in Seattle, Washington. Conference attendees represented private, public, and community colleges from across the country. There was a strong emphasis on the ongoing ways that HR can strengthen their impact on the employee experience from comprehensive onboarding to employee engagement. The HR team will be evaluating our processes to continue improvement in these areas.

Benefits

During the summer, the HR team will prepare for the annual open enrollment period for full-time employees and retirees. We will continue to support our employees in understanding and navigating their choices by providing workshops and drop-in sessions. The district was recently notified of the continuation of the Scripps Health contract with Anthem through the rest of the plan year.

Recruitment figures as of May 23:

34 permanent recruitments in progress

- 13 – Admin/CAST
- 3 – Certificated/ECE Lab School
- 16 – Classified
- 2 – Faculty

62 part-time faculty recruitments in progress

- 6 additional part-time faculty postings have closed, and departments are still hiring from those application pools

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING & GRANTS (IRPG)

Accreditation

The Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, through its Substantive Change Committee, approved Palomar College's substantive change application for the proposed Bachelor of Science in Building Performance and Environmental Design. This approval represented the final required step before the application advanced to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors for consideration.

Integrated Planning

On May 6, the Senior Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Grants (IRP&G) delivered the annual institutional effectiveness presentation to the Governing Board. The presentation included an analysis of regional population trends, community participation, student enrollment, academic progress, and outcomes. It also introduced six key planning metrics that will guide student journey improvements over the next several years.

The IRP&G team also completed a progress update on the Vision Plan Action Plan, which was presented to the College Council. During its August retreat, the Council will review this progress and set institutional priorities for the coming year.

Additionally, the College Council reviewed progress on its own goals at its final meeting of the year and will finalize next year's goals during the August retreat.

Institutional Research

Throughout the semester, the research team shared results from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), including a focused presentation to the Student Services division in May. The team also shared findings related to tutoring services from the



annual student survey, alongside usage and success data drawn from the district's data systems.

Grants

Palomar College has been recertified as an eligible Hispanic-Serving Institution for 2025, maintaining eligibility for federal funding under Titles III, V, and VII. In response to the 2024 updates to 2 CFR Part 200, IRP&G developed a Risk Monitoring Framework to enhance compliance across all stages of grant development and management.

To better communicate the outcomes of completed grants, IRP&G launched a new Impact Report template. Reports will be published on the grants webpage for recently completed grants including the California Apprenticeship Initiative's Military Leadership Apprenticeship Program, the Pathway to Law School Initiative, and the GEAR-UP Partnership Grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Marketing/Advertising/Promotion

The media placements designed to support the summer and fall enrollment goals launched in early May, with the content scheduled to adjust to a focus for fall enrollment only in early July. The Palomar Makes It Possible digital advertising strategy inclusive of academic area advertising as well as brand-related enrollment-focused ads designed to support enrollment goals continued as scheduled. This integrated digital advertising strategy generates qualified traffic to the associated landing pages and the palomar.edu website. In April, the campaign generated nearly 469,000 impressions while remaining cost-efficient.

Social media traffic to the website increased 34% over the previous May and remains the 4th ranked source of all traffic generated to the Palomar.edu website. Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and LinkedIn generated the majority of the social media traffic to Palomar.edu. The other overall top channels of social media traffic to the website were Google Sites, Reddit, and Yelp. The overall top channels of traffic to the website are direct traffic, organic search, and referral traffic.

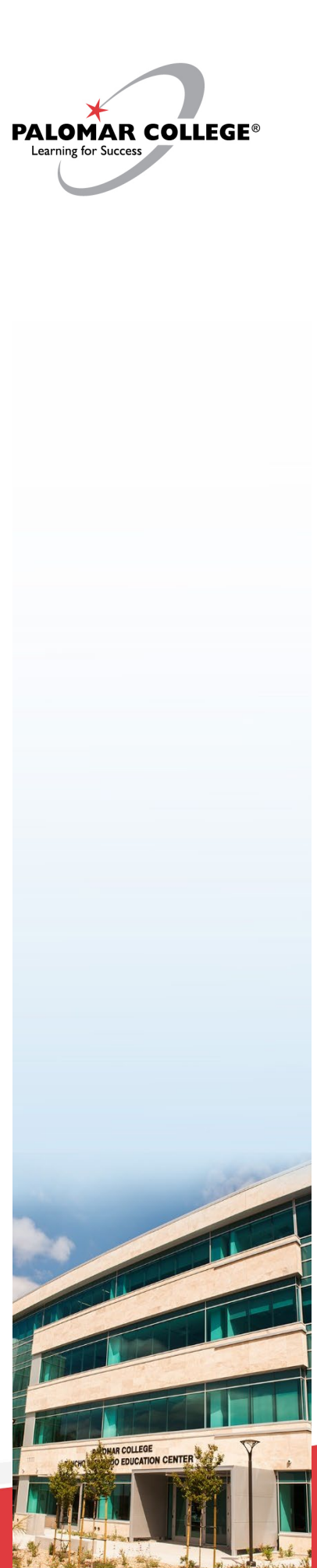
A year-over-year performance comparison of growth within each of our social media platforms shows mixed results. The growth in both Facebook and X followers compared to last April remained flat. Followers on LinkedIn grew 6% compared to May 2024. Instagram is continuing to show a significant increase at 12%. Followers on our TikTok channel grew 17% compared to the previous May.



Sample Social Media Post in May



Sample Social Media Post in May



Throughout May, our social media posts focused on increasing awareness of upcoming enrollment dates, the excitement around Commencement, the performing arts schedule, construction updates, and campus events.

Community and Media Relations

The Public Affairs Office continues to work with student reporters to provide information and schedule interviews for their stories. In collaboration with a Coast News reporter, an article featuring Professor David Hamilton ran in the [May 14 edition](#) of the publication.

A feature story on the [2025-26 Scholarship Season](#) was developed and posted early in the month of May as the scholarship application opened on May 5. This is in addition to a story on the Palomar College [2025 Valedictorian](#), and one on the Comet Football Stadium receiving [international attention](#). A media alert regarding the May 23 Commencement Ceremony was distributed to all regional and community news outlets on May 19. A post Ceremony [press release](#) was issued on May 23, noting the 4,500 conferred degrees and certificates and 728 graduates who walked the stage. These stories and the press release are available on the [Palomar News website](#). Palomar College received 364 media mentions in the May. This equates to a publicity market value of over \$179,656 for the district.

PIO Julie Lanthier Bandy attended the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee meeting, Board of Directors meeting and served on the Rising Stars scholarship selection committee for the Chamber. She also attended the final celebration of the San Marcos Chamber Rising Stars. This event features a close collaboration with San Marcos Unified School District high schools and elected officials from throughout north county. Superintendent/President Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey welcomed a standing-room only crowd of families and their students.

Internal/External Communications and Public Affairs

PIO Lanthier Bandy worked with San Diego and Imperial Counties Community College Association Public Information Officers to prepare a joint press release celebrating the season of Commencement throughout the two-county region.

PIO Lanthier Bandy attended the Government Relations Liaison meetings hosted by the Community College League of California (CCLC), and California Community College Chancellor's Office. PIO Lanthier Bandy also attended the North County Economic Summit hosted by the North County Economic Development Council along with Palomar College administrators.

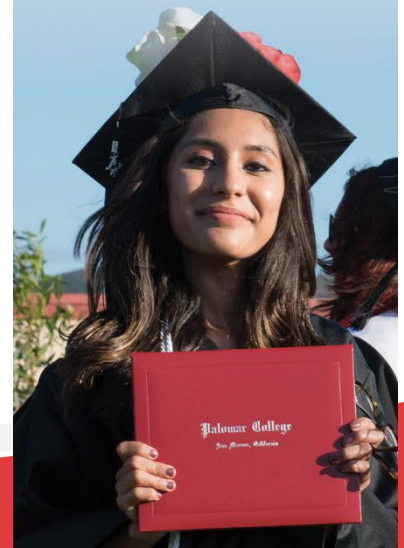
The Creative Services team worked to deliver over 3,000 Commencement Ceremony programs and over 70 newly designed signs to support the logistics and safety guidelines established for the celebration held in the football stadium for the first time. This work is in addition to supporting the many year-end event needs for invitations, posters and other collateral.

FOUNDATION

Fundraising Activities

Scholarship Program

May was a strong month for the Palomar College Foundation and our scholarship program, with several generous contributions underscoring our shared commitment to student success. We are proud to announce a \$10,000 donation from the Dr. Seuss Foundation in support of the Nathan Daum Music Scholarship. This gift honors Nathan's legacy and passion



for music while empowering future generations of student musicians to pursue their educational and artistic goals at Palomar College. We are deeply grateful for the Dr. Seuss Foundation's continued partnership and investment in the arts.

We also received a \$5,000 contribution from the Trades Champion Scholarship, which supports students working toward certificates in skilled trades. As the demand for trained professionals in fields such as welding, construction, and automotive technology continues to grow, this scholarship plays a vital role in helping students access training that leads directly to high-wage, high-demand careers. In addition to these new gifts, the ongoing commitment of our donors was exemplified by a renewed contribution of \$750 to the Albert La Vaque Scholarship. Longtime supporters like this make a lasting difference through their sustained dedication to helping students achieve their educational dreams.

Each of these contributions, whether new or renewed, represents a meaningful investment in our students and their future. We are grateful to our donors for their generosity and vision, and we look forward to continuing our mission of expanding access to education through scholarships and support.

Grant Program

The Foundation submitted the final grant report to the Parker Foundation. Their generous support allowed us to provide laptops to 81 Rising Scholars, students who are formerly incarcerated and working to rebuild their lives through education. These laptops were more than technology; they were lifelines, connecting students to learning, support, and a future they once thought was out of reach.

In addition, the Foundation recently submitted two new grant applications, including one to The Allstate Foundation to enhance student services, and another to the HMC Designing Futures Foundation to support scholarships for students in the Architecture program.

President's Associates & Community Gathering Event

On May 12, the Palomar College Foundation hosted its President's Associates and Community Gathering Event at the California Center for the Arts in Escondido. This unforgettable evening brought together more than 150 donors, community partners, college leadership, and friends of the Foundation in celebration of the power of education and the transformational impact of philanthropy. Superintendent/President Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey delivered an inspiring update and Katie Johanski, Chair-Elect of the Foundation Board, shared the impact of the work of the Foundation.

The highlight of the night was our students. We were honored to showcase their inspiring, innovative work across multiple disciplines—from breathtaking fashion designs that graced the runway during the MODA show to visionary interior design, architecture, and furniture pieces that reflected both artistry and technical mastery. These displays weren't just projects, they were stories of persistence, passion, and purpose.

Commencement

The Foundation is proud to welcome our 2025 graduates to the Palomar College Alumni Association. Each graduate received a gift of a journal at their seat during the Commencement Ceremony.



Alumni Association gift to 2025 graduates



President's Invitational Golf Classic

Excitement is building for the 2025 President's Invitational Golf Classic following a successful Golf Committee Kick-off Meeting held in May. The meeting brought together dedicated committee members and community partners to begin planning what promises to be another outstanding event. This year's tournament is scheduled for Monday, October 20, 2025, at the beautiful Country Club of Rancho Bernardo. Known for its picturesque course and exceptional hospitality, the venue provides the perfect backdrop for a day of camaraderie, friendly competition, and philanthropic support.

Thanks to the enthusiastic support of early sponsors, the event has already secured \$20,000 in sponsorship commitments, which is an encouraging sign of the community's continued dedication to the cause. With strong momentum and a committed team, the 2025 Golf Classic is well on its way to achieving another record-breaking year in support of our students.

Community Engagement

Community & Student Events

The Foundation supported many student events with Executive Director Stacy Rungaitis attending the EOPS, Rising Scholars, TRIO/SSS, Palomar Promise, Rooted in Resilience graduation celebrations. Executive Director Rungaitis also attended the 68th Fire Academy graduation celebrating 38 new firefighters with a ceremony and fire demonstration, and the presentations of Architecture Design students that included enlightening critiques by industry partners. Cabinet and Furniture technology students showcased their work to community partners.



Professor Dr. Martin Leyva, Executive Director Stacy Rungaitis, and Superintendent/President Dr. Star Rivera-Lacey at the EOPS, Promise, Trio Rising Scholars, and Dreamers Success Recognition

Magic Golf Cart Tour

Corporate executive and potential Foundation Board Member Venetta Eaton visited the San Marcos campus to take the golf cart tour in May. Venetta's interest in serving Palomar College and our students through the mission of the Foundation became stronger after seeing firsthand the many features and offerings of the College.

Community Connections

Several members of the Foundation and Palomar team attended the North County Economic Summit, hosted by the North San Diego Economic Development Council. The presentations highlighted the most recent economic forecast for the region and nation. In addition, Executive Director Rungaitis, and team members from the workforce development offices, including Interim Associate Dean Wendy Nelson and Assistant Professor of Cooperative Education Jason Jarvinen, hosted Vista Chamber staff to discuss potential partnerships and deeper engagement.

