

OPPORTUNITY

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NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

Recent San Jac grads celebrate LyondellBasell careers

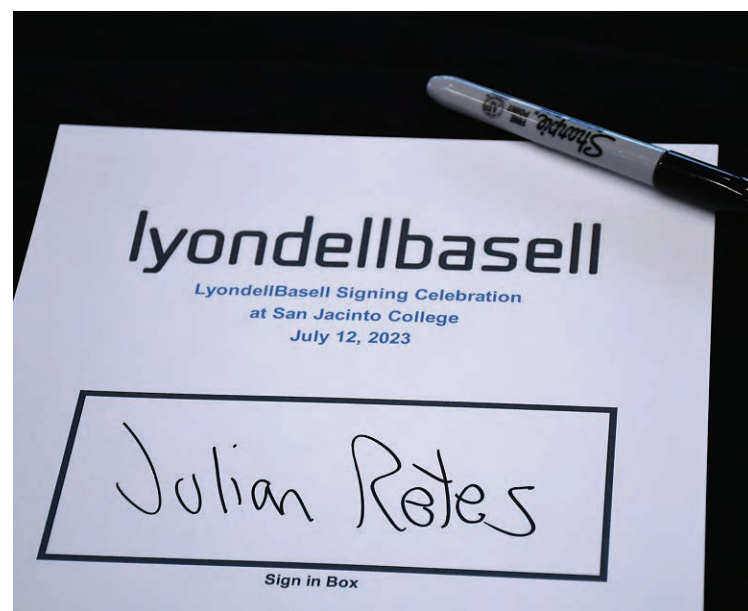
In a signing day tradition, LyondellBasell and San Jacinto College celebrated recent process technology graduates who started solid careers at local LyondellBasell plants.

The celebration took place at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology this July at the Central Campus.

The nine signees (one unable to attend) included December 2022 graduate Joe Sosa and May 2023 graduates Luis Alvarez, Caidon Hart, Isaac Gonzalez, Arnold Marquez, Anthony Milbauer, Julian Reyes, Chris Robinson, and Brandon Robles.

Receiving LyondellBasell scholarships were current San Jac students Juan Ruiz, Jenna Kimbell, Jonathon Sanderson, Justin Johns, and Nicholas Villegas.

View more event photos at bit.ly/LYBsigning7-23.



PROFESSOR WINS INAUGURAL VANGUARD AWARD FOR CAREER EXCELLENCE

By **Neesha Hosein**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

As a career paramedic, little surprises Kristine Kern, but when she discovered she'd won the Vanguard Award, she was pleasantly taken aback.

"I had no idea I was even nominated until I got an email congratulating me as a winner," said Kern, San Jacinto College emergency medical services paramedic professor and clinical coordinator. "I'm one of 23 people in the country to get this, the only one in Texas, and among them, I'm the only educator. Learning all that humbled me to tears."

Significance of award

The American Ambulance Association's inaugural Vanguard Awards included 23 women who represent a diverse group of EMS professionals with 35-plus years of excellence in mobile health care. Winners were recognized at the President's Reception of the American Ambulance Association Annual Conference and Trade Show in Las Vegas June 26-28.

At the conference, Kern was elected the Texas Chapter Leader for the National Organization of Women in Emergency Services, and her closest friends and family were there to witness her special moment.

"I remain incredibly humbled to receive this prestigious award," Kern said. "Lifetime career achievement recognition is something I never expected and could've completed my career without, but I am truly honored to have been recognized among such accomplished women."

A passion for teaching

Kern has been an EMT/paramedic for almost 36 years and teaching for 28 years, the last 10 at San Jac.

"I broke my leg badly at work in the '90s and was compelled to go into teaching. I stayed because I loved it," she said. "I decided I would continue to volunteer as a paramedic in my community. I was the assistant chief for the Friendswood EMS for 10 years."

Even during her down time, she is thinking of ways to improve the learning environment for her students.

"I absolutely love what I do," Kern said. "My favorite part of the job is figuring out how to teach medicine in different ways because every student understands things a little differently. I enjoy witnessing their 'aha' moment."

For example, when teaching about heart and circulation, she might use a fire truck, car engine, or a plumbing system to illustrate



Photos courtesy of Kristine Kern

how it works. She also creates games to make learning fun.

"I don't believe a student should learn how I teach, but rather I need to teach how each student learns. It's incredibly important," she said.

Career inspiration started at home

Both Kern's parents were volunteer fire fighters for their community.

"Long before 9-1-1, we had these red phones in the house called fire phones," she said. "You'd dial a seven-digit number, it would ring three times, and then someone would pick it up and give the information, like a dispatch.

Several people in the community wanted to help, so they joined forces and trained to be in the fire department, my parents included."



At age 8, Kern watched her mom get involved with the fire department — mostly considered a man's job then. She found it fascinating and would often play a victim in the training sessions.

Professor wins continued on page 5

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Sept. 4	Labor Day Holiday	Closed	All Campuses, Online
Sept. 11	Take2 Classes Begin		All Campuses, Online
Sept. 14-Oct. 12	Josh Litos Art Exhibit	Varies	Central Campus Library (Building C21)
Sept. 18-Nov. 2	Miguel Covarrubias Art Exhibit	Varies	North Campus Gallery (Building N1)

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu.



SAN JAC ALUMNUS GRADUATES FROM UNIVERSITY WITH 3 MAJORS, 3 MINORS, AND 4.0 IN 4 YEARS

By Jacquelynn Conger
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College alumnus Saad Nadeem recently graduated from the University of Houston in four years with three majors, three minors, and a 4.0 GPA. He credits his success and drive to achieve to his family's support and his time at San Jac.

Nadeem graduated in May with degrees in health (from the College of Education), human nutrition and food, and exercise science. His minors were biology, business administration, and management and leadership. He plans to attend a Texas medical school next to become a doctor and care for under-served populations in Harris County. He is also eyeing an MBA to feed his passion for the business side of medicine.

"I aspire to make a meaningful impact on the community that has supported and

shaped me throughout my journey," said Nadeem. "With its rich cultural diversity and vibrant populations, Houston holds a special place in my heart."

A transformative experience

Nadeem started as a dual credit student at Clear Horizons Early College High School, where he began his "transformative" experience at San Jac. The College helped him develop both academically and personally as a young adult.

"San Jacinto College became my second home during those formative years," he said. "Through scholarships, research opportunities, and more, San Jac opened doors for me that I never thought possible at such a young age."

San Jac's academic excellence and dedication to student success helped him build a strong work ethic, time management, and ability to adapt to the

rigors of higher education — invaluable once he transferred to UH.

Family support

Nadeem's family immigrated from Pakistan to the U.S. when he was 5. His parents left to give their children a better future.

"Their sacrifice and determination are a constant reminder of the value of hard work, resilience, and gratitude," Nadeem said.

His father's relentless work ethic — sometimes working two jobs to support their family — showed Nadeem the importance of sacrificing for others. His mother showered him with love, encouragement, and guidance.

"My journey is not mine alone: It is a testament to the countless sacrifices made by my parents and the opportunities they have provided for me and my siblings," he said.

He also appreciates the support of his grandmother, "Nene." He credits her with instilling in him the values of compassion, empathy, and service and nudging him toward the medical field.

"She recognized my innate desire to make a positive impact in the lives of others and guided me toward a path that aligned with my passion," he said.

Even though his Nene has passed, her influence continues to drive his life.

"Her memory serves as a beacon of strength and a reminder of the immense love and support I have been fortunate to receive," Nadeem said. "I carry her values, teachings, and unwavering belief in my heart as I navigate my educational and professional journey."



PROMISE SCHOLAR MAKES PROMISE TO SELF: NO DOUBTING, KEEP TRYING

By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

What does a debt-free degree look like? For Promise Scholar Mya McCray, it's meant not only fewer financial worries but also the chance to explore her options.

The C.E. King High School graduate has been attending San Jacinto College through the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship since fall 2022. This scholarship — available to all in-district high school seniors — covers an associate degree or certificate at San Jac 100% after other financial aid.

Growing up, inspired by an aunt in uniform, McCray pictured herself as a police officer too. During her senior year, she researched and applied to several universities, but housing and tuition



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

always created roadblocks. Her school counselor and her parents encouraged her to pursue Promise @ San Jac instead.

The scholarship has allowed her to take classes full time, work part time, and even live in her own apartment for a season.

"I'm a very independent person," she said. "I like doing things on my own."

At San Jac, McCray also discovered nursing — not fighting crime — is her true passion. A natural caretaker when her mom and grandparents got sick, she wants to help others get healthy again. After finishing her basics, she plans to apply for the College's licensed vocational nursing program — a step up from her current job as a certified nurse aide.

"That's what I love about San Jac: I have time to think about what I want to do," she said.

Despite being independent and the first in her family to attend college, McCray has learned to lean on San Jac's student resources. She has met with a peer tutor for English classes and used San Jac Marketplace for groceries and café meals.

"San Jac is very helpful and understanding," she said. "If you need help with schoolwork, you can go to campus, email, or call. Tutors are always available. If you're going through anything personal, there are counselors you can talk to on campus too."

McCray's advice for future Promise Scholars? If you're not sure what career

to pursue, find your passion first.

"I know how you feel," McCray said. "I didn't know what I wanted to do. Apply for the Promise Scholarship, complete your basics, do some research, and get your mind on what you really want. By the second year, figure out what you want to do."

While Promise @ San Jac has removed financial stress, McCray already knows a thing or two about removing distractions to focus on the goal. She sees herself continuing from licensed vocational nurse to registered nurse, then someday working as a travel nurse.

"I have a lot of goals in my life," she said. "I'm young, but I'm taking it one step at a time."

When doubts creep in, she says keep trying your best: "Don't ever say you can't do it if you haven't tried."

Apply for Promise @ San Jac Scholarship

The scholarship is open to all in-district high school seniors (class of 2024) who complete all steps and enroll full time at San Jac in fall 2024.

2024 Deadlines:

- Sept. 1, 2023:
Promise pledge opens.
- Feb. 22, 2024:
Pledge and apply to San Jac.
- April 25, 2024:
Complete FAFSA or TASFA.
- July 18, 2024:
Complete all enrollment steps.

Learn more: sanjac.edu/promise



PROMISE
@SAN JAC

OUR PROMISE TO STUDENTS

Through the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship, students can earn an associate degree or a certificate with tuition, books, and supplies covered 100%.

Thanks to Promise @ San Jac, college is possible.
It's not just our belief ... it's our promise.

Learn more at sanjac.edu/promise.

SAN JACINTO
COLLEGE

An Equal Opportunity Institution

Professor wins continued from page 5

"I knew very young what I wanted to do," Kern said. "Right out of high school, I attended San Antonio Community College. I became a paramedic on the day I turned 19. I wouldn't trade it for the world. It's absolutely the only thing I ever wanted to do."

What the future holds

Although she's at the tail end of her

career, now eligible for retirement, she's not ready to call it quits just yet.

"My most important professional goal is to keep making a difference, keep plugging along, keep improving myself so I can do better for the students," she said. "Many start off having no medical knowledge to becoming a licensed paramedic, autonomous in the field treating patients, and I enjoy being part of that journey."

EXPLORING NATURE'S CLASSROOM: GREAT OUTDOORS CLUB TAKES STUDENTS INTO THE WILD

By **Melissa Trevizo**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Growing up near the mountains in Poland, San Jacinto College English professor Izabela Uscinski has always felt a calling to the outdoors.

"I've been going on trips in the woods and mountains since I was little," she said. "In the summers, I would go hiking and camping, and during winters, I would be skiing and sledding."

So when the North Campus Great Outdoors Club needed a faculty advisor in 2018, Uscinski jumped at the chance.

"I wanted to get involved because I love the outdoors, but I also wanted to offer our students the opportunity to experience the effects of being surrounded by nature," she said. "It's a great way for students to meet others with similar interests and get to know us, the professors."

In 2016, government professor Cody

Pogue and geology professor Dr. Liana Boop founded the club to introduce students to backpacking and camping in rural environments. Boop and Pogue wanted to create opportunities for students to travel outside Houston and discover new landscapes while helping them develop survival skills in unfamiliar surroundings.

Most recently, the group has hiked in the local forests like Sam Houston National Park and Lake Houston Wilderness Park and camped overnight at Garner State Park in Concan, Texas.

Uscinski recommends that all students, regardless of their experience with hiking and camping, give the club a try.

"We are always looking to add new members, and students can join at any time," she said. "Students are sometimes intimidated by the idea of going hiking, but there is no requirement to have any special skills. If anything, I'd love for students who



Photo courtesy of Omar Perez

had never hiked before to try it out and see if they like it."

Omar Perez, the Great Outdoors Club

president, values the friendships he's made throughout the club's adventures.

"Every single trip with the Great Outdoors Club has made a lasting impression on me," said Perez. "It's a great bonding experience, and you get to connect well with everyone."

Most memorable for Perez was a hike he took with the club shortly after breaking his foot.

"We had been planning the hike for months, and I knew everyone – including me – was looking forward to going on the trip. I got a bit discouraged and depressed thinking I wouldn't be able to go," he said. "I got the green light from my doctor, but I was still hesitant. Professor Uscinski and every single member of the club literally helped me up that mountain. I felt so supported, and I knew I belonged there."

The Great Outdoors Club calls the North Campus home but is open to students from all campuses. For more information, check out [Instagram.com/thegreatoutdoorsclub](https://www.instagram.com/thegreatoutdoorsclub) or email izabela.uscinski@sjcd.edu.



Photo courtesy of Izabela Uscinski

THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram

Our summer STEM Camp for 3rd-5th graders started today! Looks like the campers had a blast!



152 likes, 10 comments, 3 saves

New programs coming soon!

2023:

Autonomous vehicle repair (*certificate*)
Engineering technology (*associate degree*)
Heavy diesel equipment and crane repair
(*certificate and associate degree*)
Medical laboratory assistant (*certificate*)
Plumbing (*certificate*)

**TIME IS RUNNING OUT,
SAN JAC PROMISE
SCHOLARS!**



Facebook

San Jacinto College is rolling out new programs to meet the needs of the growing workforce in Houston and along the Gulf Coast!



271 Reactions, 33 comments, 70 shares



Twitter

Promise Scholars – today is the day! If you haven't already, you must register today to continue at San Jac as a Promise Scholar. How to register: sanjac.edu/registration



1 like, 1 retweet, 7 link clicks



LinkedIn

In April, San Jacinto College students took first and second place at the 2023 North American Process Technology Alliance Troubleshooting Skills Competition. Congratulations! "I couldn't be prouder of our San Jac teams," said Jim Griffin, CPET associate vice chancellor/senior vice president. "They worked hard in preparation for this national competition. These seven students are excellent examples of student success."



76 reactions, 4 comments, 2 shares

YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



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CENTRAL CAMPUS

8060 Spencer Hwy., Pasadena, TX 77505

SOUTH CAMPUS

13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, TX 77089

MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

GENERATION PARK CAMPUS

13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044

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VISION & MISSION



Vision — San Jacinto College will advance the social and economic mobility of all members of our community. We will be known for our excellence in teaching and learning, our intentional student-centered support, and our commitment to every student. We will be the preferred workforce and economic development partner in the region and a champion for lifelong learning. San Jacinto College will inspire students to explore opportunities, define their educational and career paths, and achieve their goals and dreams.

Mission — San Jacinto College is focused on student success, academic progress, university transfer, and employment. We are committed to opportunities that enrich the quality of life in the communities we serve.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS



A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow's community leaders. For more than 25 years, the Foundation has helped thousands of students reach their goals. Our former students and graduates have filled vital roles in hospitals, classrooms, executive offices, manufacturing plants, and laboratories across our region and beyond. They have also won the World Series and NBA championships, starred in major motion pictures, and created major theatrical productions. Help our students today with the gift of education. Contact the San Jacinto College Foundation at 281-998-6104 or visit sanjac.edu/foundation.

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top five community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute, and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.

