

OPPORTUNITY

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NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

Chancellor delivers State of the College address

Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer delivered the annual State of the College address Nov. 9 at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology on the Central Campus.

The theme for this year's address was "Within These Walls..." and focused on innovations in technology, advancements of students and staff, and the impact of supporters that happen every day within the College's walls. Audience members included the Board of Trustees, elected officials, industry partners, community leaders, and donors.

Watch the State of the College address at bit.ly/SJC-SOTC-23.



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

Dokes named Generation Park Campus provost

Dr. Destry Dokes has been named provost of San Jacinto College's Generation Park Campus in northeast Houston. He has been serving as the executive director of the College's newest campus since 2020.

With more than 20 years of leadership experience in medical and higher education administration and a doctoral degree in business administration from Walden University, Dokes has shown his ability to hold organizational leadership roles.

He serves as board chair of YMCA Lake Houston and board member of Partnership Lake Houston and is

the Summer Creek Rotary Club past president. Additionally, Dokes has developed instrumental partnerships with Humble ISD, Service Wire Inc., and East Harris County Empowerment Council.

Dokes and his team have continued to grow campus enrollment by creating strong community partnerships.



Photo by Andrea Vasquez, San Jacinto College

San Jac wins big at NCMPR competition

San Jacinto College won six prestigious Medallion Awards during the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations District 4 annual conference in October.

The external relations team

brought home awards for these projects:

- Gold for the 2022 Chancellor's Report to the Community
- Gold for the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship campaign
- Silver for the 2022-2023 baseball and softball media guides
- Silver for the alumni association e-newsletter
- Silver for the 2022 mascot launch social media series
- Bronze for excellence in short form writing for "Occupational Therapy Career Choice Is No Accident"

"These awards are a testament to the collective talent and unwavering commitment of our team," said Teri Crawford, vice chancellor of external relations. "They inspire us to continue pushing boundaries and delivering excellence in all our marketing and communications efforts."

In addition, San Jac Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer received the Pacesetter of the Year award, which recognizes a community college president or CEO who has demonstrated special leadership and support in college communications and marketing.

Amanda Fenwick, vice president for marketing and public relations, was also named the district's Communicator of the Year — one of NCMPR's most prestigious awards for a member who has demonstrated leadership and ability in college communications.

Both Hellyer and Fenwick will vie for their national titles in March 2024 at the national NCMPR conference in Seattle.

PANDORA SPECTROMETER EMPOWERS STUDENTS AND GLOBAL CLIMATE RESEARCH

By **Neesha Hosein**
San Jacinto College

The Pandora Spectrometer sits on the roof of the Science and Allied Health Building at the San Jacinto College South Campus, symbolizing the College's leap into the realm of global climate analysis.

The College's undergraduate research efforts focusing on global climate change and air quality have seen much success in recent years. The collective effort between various institutions, encompassing student participation have resulted in the creation of more than 20 posters, presentations, data analysis, and contributions to more than 10 articles and peer-reviewed publications on the subject. This progress inspired the decision to bring Pandora to San Jac.

"San Jac is pushing the limits of what we can do computationally," said Dr. Connie Gomez, South Campus physical sciences department chair. "Students get to participate in data collection and analysis, enabling them to comprehend various air pollutants and their associated impacts."

What is the Pandora Spectrometer?

Pandora is an autonomous device that enables students to engage in cutting-edge research technology and contribute to the calibration of NASA's satellite data.

It uses spectroscopy to study ultraviolet and visible wavelengths of light. Its primary function is to measure total column profiles of trace gases in the atmosphere. This is a game-changing innovation for atmospheric research, enabling the measurement of gases like ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and formaldehyde.

After the South Campus became a NASA-approved site, NASA provided the equipment, and the College purchased Pandora using Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund grant money. Just before the fall 2023 semester, the campus maintenance and information technology services teams oversaw the installation.

Why is Pandora important to San Jac?

Pandora will promote student success.

"The acquisition of the Pandora Spectrometer enhances the College's

research capabilities and contributes to the Pandonia Global Network, a global satellite measurement calibration," Gomez said. "The data is shared with all members of the network, and each unit is standardized and calibrated so data is in one format, easier for researchers to access and use around the world."

Established in 2018, the Pandonia Global Network processes and shares global air quality monitoring and satellite validation data. Pandora is supported by NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Environmental Protection Agency through the Joint Program Planning Group.

"This initiative involves over 165 university and research institutions in 35 countries, with San Jacinto College being the only known community college to have this device as of now," said Dr. Madhu Gyawali, physics professor and principal investigator on the project.

As the principal investigator, Gyawali's role encompasses training students for their participation in the research project, establishing research goals and objectives, and coordinating with NASA and the other agencies for data validation and calibration. He will be working closely with NASA research scientists Dr. Lok Lamsal and Thomas F. Hanisco, who played a crucial role in the College acquiring the Pandora spectrometer.

How Pandora supports student success

"First, it equips students with a fundamental comprehension of the air quality measurement process and data analysis, providing valuable skills and knowledge," Gyawali said. "Additionally, it actively engages them in activities such as conference presentations and peer-reviewed article



writing, enhancing their academic and research prowess and enriching their resumes."

The Pandora project is an offshoot of the College's undergraduate research center. It's not just about the atmospheric data. Students learn how to process enormous amounts of data, a valuable skill in many career fields.

"It's a learning opportunity that goes beyond our classrooms," Gomez said. "Understanding analysis of data collection and learning how to develop codes that can analyze a huge amount of data will increase their value in the job market and be a big advantage for our students."

Pandora's future at San Jac

STEM faculty will work with ITS to match what technologies researchers need for on-campus activities, starting with computer capabilities.

Pandora is not limited to specific programs but is open to all students from various academic backgrounds — namely, those eager to gain hands-on experience in atmospheric measurement processes.

Pandora is here to stay.

To learn more about San Jac's STEM programs, scan the QR code.



Photos by Nate LaValley, San Jacinto College

ALUMNA KIRI ROHNE: FROM CAR LIVING TO CARDIOVASCULAR NURSE



By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

In 2017, Kiri Rohne had a dream: to move out of her four-door home, a Toyota Cressida.

Five years later, not only would she be out of her car, but she would also be working in a hospital after completing the entire nursing pathway — from certified nurse aide to Bachelor of Science in Nursing — at San Jacinto College.

Overcoming late start

At 31, Rohne thought it was too late and too costly to pursue college.

“It felt like I had to make money to live or go to school,” she said.

Despite being practically homeless, she wanted to help others as a nurse. While working at Chick-fil-A, she learned San Jac offered scholarships and affordable tuition — plus flexible classes to fit around her job and life.

“For someone who was barely providing for herself, it gave me hope that I would be able to go to school to become a nurse no matter how long it took me,” she said.

Rolling up sleeves

In 2018, Rohne finished San Jac’s six-month certified nurse aide program, got her license, and started working with nursing home residents. This role deepened her desire to continue training so she could help patients of all ages with more than just daily living activities.

When she transitioned to the vocational nursing program, Rohne faced her biggest challenge yet. After full days of classes and clinicals Monday through Friday, she worked “double weekends” at the nursing home — 5:45 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. shifts Saturday and Sunday. She continued this grueling schedule while going straight into the LVN to RN transition nursing program.

“There were a lot — and I do mean a lot — of tears through the process, and exhaustion was definitely a thing,” she said. “But to get where I wanted to be, I was going to have to push through it to

make it happen.”

A registered nurse by 2021, Rohne still wasn’t done. With her “get ‘er done” attitude, she immediately enrolled in San Jac’s one-year BSN program — training that would open nursing leadership roles.

Reaping the rewards

Today, Rohne is a board-certified cardiovascular nurse at HCA Health Care Clear Lake Heart Hospital. No longer does she worry about a steady paycheck or a reliable roof.

While San Jac’s simulation labs and hands-on clinicals prepared her for real-world nursing, she credits much of her success to her support system — from the College’s counselors, financial aid representatives, and tutors to nursing faculty.

“I remember the teachers and staff being so sympathetic and going out of their way to help me or meet up with me to go over work,” she said. “I always knew they wanted me to succeed. They didn’t just say it, but I could feel it, and that helped more than they know.”

Now, as a nurse, Rohne fulfills her two core desires: helping and learning.

“Health is more than just physical, and I strive every day — every shift — to help brighten the spirits of my patients,” she said. “There is also a side to me that always craves learning ... and the nursing field is quite literally packed with things to learn.”

Embracing struggles and success

Some people choose to forget their past, but not Rohne. She embraces the journey she’s traveled, knowing that her difficulties led to sweeter success.

Was the stress worth it?

“I’m proud of my story and how hard I fought to get here,” she said. “When people ask me where I graduated, I’m proud to say San Jacinto College.”

Although Rohne wouldn’t change her past “because it helped make me the nurse I am today,” she has one suggestion for San Jac: “Now y’all need a master’s program.”

To learn more about San Jac’s nursing programs, scan the QR code.



HOLIDAY SAFETY 101

By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

It's the most wonderful time of year for many, criminals included. The season of bustling stores, big-ticket gifts, and distracted shoppers entices less-than-merry people to make their move.

Veteran police officer and San Jacinto College kickboxing instructor Perry Mayorga-Guerrero shares how to stay safe this holiday season and beyond.

Q: What makes people vulnerable during the holidays?

A: People have more on their minds: "What am I going to get my family? Will they like it?" Also, they are buried in their phones and don't stop to notice what's around them. When people should be more alert, the focus comes off personal safety.

Q: What are the biggest safety concerns for me?

A: There's a relatively new crime called "jugging": Someone buys expensive stuff at a store or withdraws a lot of money at the bank. The criminal follows and robs.

The biggest time someone

could rob you is when you're not aware of your surroundings, or you're in your comfort zone. It happens in places you frequent all hours of the day.

Q: How can I avoid putting myself at risk?

A: Go out in groups. Often, someone wanting to harm you would stop if you were with other people. Criminals are looking for easy targets — someone alone without protection. If you can deter at least one thing, the bad guy's justification goes down.

Q: How can I stay safe

while shopping in public?

A: Besides taking people with you, you could get a store security person to escort you to your car. Also, be open to ordering through a store's mobile app. Many stores offer curbside pickup and will load your car for you. Online shopping and banking can mitigate your risk.

Q: How do I know someone might be scamming me?

A: If someone wants your personal information immediately — "Verify this info today" or "I need this urgently" — it's probably a scam.

When it comes to handouts, be selfish. People can prey on your giving nature by showing a photo of hospitalized "family members." There have been times when the actual parents say, "That's our kid, but we don't know you."

Give to people you know and to established charities. People with emergency needs can go through appropriate channels rather than asking on the side of the road.

Q: If someone threatens me physically, what should I do?

A: Yell, "Fire!" Everyone loves to see a fire and will turn to look. The more eyes you can

get, the more chances others can intervene.

If you're yelling and nobody is coming, go for soft body parts like the eyes, ears, or nose. Criminals want to attack a vulnerable person, get what they want, and leave. If the victim takes an active role, it breaks the crook's line of thinking and may give you time to get away.

Q: What about using self-defense tools?

A: Pepper spray and self-defense equipment are fine if you're trained to use them and the criminal doesn't take them and use them against you. But don't rely on a tool alone because it won't always work.

Q: Any final thoughts?

A: Look people in the eye as you pass and say hello. You can read whether they're friendly or have bad intentions. You're also letting that person know you know they're there. Criminals don't want you to see their face and identify them.

Finally, try out my class or another self-defense program. If you come in with a can-do attitude, you'll do well.



MARIA
General Studies

LIVE UP TO

YOUR PROMISE!

With the **Promise @ San Jac Scholarship**, in-district high school seniors are eligible for money to fully cover tuition and course materials at San Jacinto College!

- **PLEDGE AND APPLY TO SAN JAC by 2/22/24**
Scan the QR code below to view scholarship requirements and to pledge. Then complete our free admission application at goapplytexas.org.
- **APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID by 4/25/24**
You must submit a FAFSA or TASFA application to qualify for Promise @ San Jac.
- **REGISTER FOR CLASSES by 7/18/24**
You must complete all enrollment steps before registering.

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Learn more about Perry Mayorga-Guerrero's Kickboxing for Fitness class at the North Campus by emailing registration.cpd@sjcd.edu or calling 281-542-2020.

IVINS HONORED AS TEXAS EDUCATION THEATRE ASSOCIATION EDUCATOR OF YEAR

By **Melissa Trevizo**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College theatre artistic director Dr. Jerry Ivins was named the 2023 Higher Education Educator of the Year by the Texas Education Theatre Association.

“I am deeply honored by the award,” said Ivins. “Seeing the past recipients, I am humbled to be included with these theatre educational giants.”

This prestigious recognition honors theatre educators who have made meaningful contributions to their field.

“Dr. Ivins’ dedication and passion for teaching have not only informed and inspired his colleagues but have also nurtured the creativity and talent of countless students, setting the stage for the cultivation of the next generation of outstanding theatre artists and educators,” said Travis Springfield, Texas Education Theatre Association president.

Ivins has taught at San Jac for 28 years. He not only is the artistic director for the College’s Central Campus theatre program but is also heavily involved in the University Interscholastic League one-act play competition as a judge, an

adjudicator, and a licensed contest manager. He runs two area and two regional contests and the state one-act play contest each year for 4A, 5A, and 6A schools. For the Texas Education Theatre Association, Ivins serves as the state theatre competition director of operations.

“My colleague at the University of Houston once said, ‘If something is happening in theatre education in Texas, Ivins either knows about it or is running it,’” he said. “I can’t help it — it’s my passion.”

And Ivins wouldn’t have it any other way. His passion stems from his own experience as a theatre student.

“Theatre saved my life. I couldn’t look anyone in the eye or speak to anyone. I joined the theatre to meet a girl, and it ended up being my life’s work,” he said. “It has provided me a safe haven. If I can do that for someone else, I’ve done what I needed to do.”

Ivins was honored at an awards ceremony Sept. 29 at the Moody Gardens Convention Center in Galveston.

To learn more about San Jac’s theatre and film program, scan the QR code.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Through Dec. 7	Art Exhibit: “Like Dust, I Lose All Form Once I Hit Water”	Varies	Free/Flickinger Fine Arts Center, South Campus Gallery (S15.143); bradly.brown@sjcd.edu
Dec. 7	Winter Art Sale	10 a.m.-8 p.m.	Grant Fine Arts Center, North Campus Gallery (N1.106); contact joe.clark@sjcd.edu
Dec. 7-9 & 14-16	Musical: “Santa’s Christmas Magic”	7:30 p.m.	\$15 general admission/Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
Dec. 10 & 17	Musical: “Santa’s Christmas Magic” (Matinee)	2:30 p.m.	\$15 general admission/Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
Dec. 17	Fall Commencement	2 p.m.	Minute Maid Park
Dec. 21 – Jan. 1	Winter Holidays	Closed	No non-instructional activity
Jan. 16	Spring Classes Begin		All campuses and online

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

THIS MONTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA



Art Institute schools are closing.

Right now, things may seem impossible.

”

"A great accomplishment shouldn't be the end of the road, just the starting point for the next leap forward."

-Harvey Mackay

“



Instagram

Our students (and Poe!) took a joyful journey through the rhythms of salsa and bachata, appreciating the vibrant essence of Hispanic culture. 🎶🌍☀️



295 Likes | 5 Comments | 107 Shares



Facebook

If you have been impacted by the closing of the Art Institute system of schools, San Jacinto College is ready to help you continue your educational journey.



99 Reactions | 8 Comments | 30 Shares



X

We're excited to see what the next steps are for all our graduates!



3 Likes | 10 Replies | 6 Clicks



LinkedIn

Starting at San Jacinto College as a student in 2001, Jennifer Salter already knew dance would be a part of her future. As a dance professor at South Campus, Salter says her life has come full circle. "A lot of what we work on at San Jac is meaning-making. It is much more emotionally involved. About one semester into the program, I can see students change how they approach dance and movement," Salter said.



15 Reactions | 53 Clicks

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CENTRAL CAMPUS

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MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

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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 10 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. For more information about San Jacinto College, visit sanjac.edu.

