

# OPPORTUNITY

# NEWS



**2** News from  
Your College

**3** Building Toward  
the Future

**4** From Student to  
Teacher

# NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

## Naming ceremony celebrates Pickavance's legacy at Maritime Campus

Rear Adm. William W. "Bear" Pickavance Jr., U.S. Navy, was honored in a ceremony March 6 at the San Jacinto College Maritime Campus for his contributions to the campus' establishment and construction. "I'm awestruck by this honor," said Pickavance. "There are so many people who put their efforts into building this program, and I'm happy to be among them."

The ceremony marked the naming of the student lounge near the campus entrance, which Pickavance designed. Thanks to an anonymous donation, the area will be named the Admiral's Lounge.

Pickavance joined San Jac in 2013 as a consultant after Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer asked him to assist in creating a maritime program and campus.

"Admiral Pickavance helped bridge the gap between higher education and industry," Hellyer said. "His passion and dedication to creating the best possible program and facilities can be seen in every corner of this campus."

Many of the campus features, including the Houston Pilot's maritime simulation suite and more, resulted from Pickavance's diligence. His dedication and hard work, along with the groundwork he laid before construction began, have shaped the Maritime Campus into what it is today.

View ceremony photos at [bit.ly/SJC-Rear-Admiral-Lounge](https://bit.ly/SJC-Rear-Admiral-Lounge). Scan the QR code to learn more about the Maritime Campus.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

## Foundation donors change lives

Kevin Rodriguez remembers his response as he sat in his car, phone in his hands, reading the email announcing he'd received a San Jacinto College Foundation scholarship. He cried.

Older than many of his classmates, Rodriguez doubted he could finish an associate degree, let alone win a scholarship.

"The scholarship represented far more than just monetary assistance," he said. "It symbolized belief — belief in my potential, my dreams, and my aspirations."

During its annual donor luncheon on Feb. 21, the Foundation celebrated lives like Rodriguez's changed thanks to generous community members who support students through scholarships and other initiatives.

The Foundation currently manages 92 active endowed scholarship funds and 134 annual scholarship funds.

Thanks to community generosity, the Foundation has awarded...

- More than 7,000 Promise @ San Jac Scholarships worth more than \$5 million
- 1,260 awards worth more than \$900,000 in 2022-2023
- 858 awards worth more than \$510,000 in fall 2023

View the luncheon photos at [bit.ly/SJC-Donor-Lunch-24](https://bit.ly/SJC-Donor-Lunch-24).

Scan the QR code to learn how you can join in changing students' lives through the Foundation.



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

## 1,300 kids get vision screenings through See to Succeed

San Jacinto College eye care technology students helped make a difference in local kids' classroom success through See to Succeed.

From Feb. 26-March 1, the College's eye care technology program teamed with eye care professionals to provide free eye

screenings, exams, and glasses fittings for Pasadena Independent School District students.

At the Pasadena Convention Center, 300 See to Succeed volunteers saw 1,313 children. About 1,280 received free glasses, and 364 received medical referrals for other eye issues.

This service learning project not only provides valuable eye exams to local children but also educates San Jac students on career-specific skill sets, such as communicating with patients and collaborating with other health care providers.

View the photos at [bit.ly/SJC-See-to-Succeed-2024](https://bit.ly/SJC-See-to-Succeed-2024).



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

# BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE: IMAAD ALI'S JOURNEY THROUGH EARLY COLLEGE SUCCESS

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
San Jacinto College

As Imaad Ali enters his senior year, he expects to graduate with his high school diploma, a college degree, and an ambitious outlook on life.

The 18-year-old is enrolled in San Jacinto College's Early College High School program on the South Campus through Dobie High School.

"When I first heard about early college, I thought it wouldn't be for me," said Ali. "But as my parents and I learned more about it, it seemed like a great deal. My tuition and books are paid, and I'm getting a head start before I

enroll at a university."

The Early College High School initiative is an open-enrollment four-year program that blends college and high school coursework, enabling students to earn up to two years of college credit tuition-free while enrolled in high school. This program serves Clear Creek, Galena Park, Pasadena, and Sheldon independent school districts, with eight high school campuses represented.

"I feel like early college has given me a training ground for what life will be like at a university," said Ali. "I'll be two years ahead of everyone else once I transfer."

During Ali's upbringing, his

parents held education in high regard.

"My parents immigrated from Pakistan in the early 2000s," said Ali. "They were always worried about my future and college. My mom was a tutor in Pakistan, and she pushed me to be the best that I can. I enjoy school and learning. I get that from her."

Ali has taken his role as college student seriously, joining Phi Theta Kappa

and the student government association. In fall 2023, Ali took on the responsibility of SGA president for the South Campus.

"After joining PTK, I learned about all the community service they do," said Ali. "It encouraged me to do more. I started as the SGA secretary, then ran for president uncontested. As the president, I will represent the student body and their needs."

As a business major, Ali has taken accounting and economics classes along with his basic courses and hopes to transfer to Texas Tech University to pursue a dual degree in business and architecture.

"I'm looking forward to what the future holds for me after San Jac," said Ali. "I know I've got a good foundation to build on."



LEARN, PLAY, AND GROW AT SAN JAC

## SUMMER CAMPS!

Programs for ages 6-18

 SAN JACINTO<sup>SM</sup>  
COLLEGE

[sanjac.edu/summer-camps](https://sanjac.edu/summer-camps)

An Equal Opportunity Institution



# FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER: ALUMNA GIVES BACK

**By Neesha Hosein**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

As a student, Kazzandra Sanchez always considered school a safe space. Today, her bilingual pre-K classroom at Pasadena Independent School District offers the same for a new generation.

“I was really into choir in high school, and it’s where I felt like myself the most,” Sanchez said. “That was because of my teachers. When you’re young, you’re at school most of your time, and I wanted to be part of that for future generations.”

## San Jac opened the right doors

While helping her register for classes, a San Jacinto College admissions advisor explained the benefits of joining an education cohort. Sanchez agreed to sign up, although she didn’t realize its value until seeing it in action.

“When I showed up to class, there was a group of students, all education majors,” Sanchez said. “I still wasn’t sure what the cohort thing was about, and I was just following the crowd from class to class. My first impression was that the professors were very nice and eager to help.”

Sanchez quickly embraced the cohort experience and the unique opportunities it presented.

“I really enjoyed being part of the

cohort because we all bonded over our career interests,” Sanchez said. “We shared goals and were all inspired by our professors, who always went above and beyond to keep us motivated.”

Sanchez completed her required observation hours at Yes Prep Charter School and Alvin ISD, getting a real-world preview. The cohort experience also created a smooth transition to Sam Houston State University and prepared her for university life.

## Forging a new path

The pandemic interrupted her final semester at San Jac but failed to slow her momentum. After participating in the College’s virtual graduation ceremony in spring 2020 with a degree in early childhood education, she was ready for the next step.

Sanchez transferred to SHSU. While attending, she worked in the orientation office, where she first met her mentor Jesus Bernal, dean of student advising.

“It was a pleasure working with Kazzandra at Sam,” Bernal said. “She fit the role of an accepted student mentor perfectly; she was an excellent role-model for students as they transitioned to college. As a transfer student from San Jac, she brought an invaluable firsthand knowledge to her role. She didn’t just tell people the answers — she educated them on the

process. If they needed directions, she walked them to the office.”

Sanchez graduated from SHSU in 2022 with a bachelor’s degree in education.

## Giving back to her community

Bernal is not surprised to see Sanchez come full circle as a teacher in the community where she grew up.

“She loves helping people,” Bernal said. “I am proud of the person she has become, educating and uplifting the community. Pasadena is lucky to have her back. She’s going to make a big impact!”

Sanchez’s first job as a middle school reading teacher with Pasadena ISD helped her realize she preferred working with much younger students. She transferred to kindergarten and was soon moved to pre-K, where she has been since September 2023.

“I really love how challenging pre-K is, and I think I’ll probably be here for a while,” Sanchez said. “A big part I didn’t realize was that I literally have to teach them how to hold a pencil, and they don’t know how to draw yet.”

Sanchez describes teaching step by step how to draw people figures with “a circle for the head and rectangle for a shirt” and simple sitting postures like “crisscross apple sauce.”

“I have to be very specific with these kids, working with their fine motor

skills,” she said. “Teaching these skills is a big transformation. They’re so sweet at this age, not afraid to be themselves. They get really excited about things like weather, snow, and music. It’s magical.”

Scan the QR code to learn more about all of San Jac’s education programs.



Photo courtesy of Kazzandra Sanchez

## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
May 14	Spring Commencement	7 p.m.	NRG Stadium
May 17	Summer hours begin	Noon	Administrative offices closed every Friday at noon through Aug. 9
May 17	2024 San Jacinto College and LyondellBasell Hollywood Nights Gala Presented by the Sinor Family	6 p.m.	sanjac.edu/gala
May 27	Memorial Day	Closed	All campuses and online
June 3	Summer classes begin	Varies	All campuses and online

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu/calendar](https://sanjac.edu/calendar).

# TRELLIS GRANT ENHANCES MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

**By Neesha Hosein**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College is one of eight higher education institutions in Texas to be awarded the Mental Health and Wellbeing Grant from the Trellis Foundation, a public charitable organization focused on enhancing postsecondary attainment for Texas students.

## Before the grant

San Jac looked at the pandemic's impact on enrollment, instruction changes, and the daily lives of students and faculty. Although the College created San Jac Cares to reach out to students throughout the pandemic, many struggled to adapt to new realities at school, work, or home.

"San Jac leaders recognized the need for more flexible options for student mental health care," said Suzanne Sambell, grant writer, office of resource development. "Our student support services staff also wanted to be able to provide more specialized training to staff and faculty so they could more effectively recognize students in mental distress, provide meaningful advice and counseling, and create effective referral systems for those needing assistance beyond what the College can provide."

In spring 2021, the College restructured counseling offices, securing licensed mental health counselors at each campus and enhancing the system for tracking mental health care requests.

"As the grant writer, I worked very closely with

Tanesha Antoine [student support services dean and grant leader] to establish what she would like to accomplish for her office," Sambell said. "We developed a list of improvements and needed resources for the student support services that she felt would most benefit San Jac students, faculty, and staff, and we named the project Assess and Improve Mental Health Services."

## Survey identifies student mental health needs

In October 2022, the College received \$195,775 from the Trellis Foundation to support mental health and neurodiversity programs over a two-year period. Trellis connected San Jac with the JED Foundation, a non-profit organization that promotes emotional health and suicide prevention for young adults.

The JED collaboration offered an opportunity to participate in the Healthy Minds Study. The survey explores mental health, service utilization, and related issues among college students. Antoine explained that students are often unaware of the extent of support services available to them, so the team is eager to hear what they have to say.

About 500 students completed the survey as of Dec. 13. Antoine is confident the survey results will help the team develop a plan to meet students' needs and better understand their perspectives on mental health services.

"We have explored how to provide unique experiences for our students that we can tie

to their mental health, such as goat yoga and engaging speakers that have shared experiences," Antoine said. "We also understand that we need to build connections and engage with our online students."

Funding will also help increase staffing, expand available hours, support a marketing campaign and social media presence, and improve overall awareness and engagement efforts.

## The plan

The grant money will help

support the goals of the Assess and Improve Mental Health Services project:

- Assess through Healthy Minds Study survey
- Create an awareness campaign for the College's mental health and basic needs resources and services
- Expand the number of mental health counselors and hours of counseling services
- Build culturally appropriate mental health resources so all student groups feel comfortable

seeking help

- Create peer-led support groups to reduce stigma for those seeking mental health counseling

Antoine feels the college community should engage in efforts to support students. Being aware, spreading knowledge, and sharing ideas are ways others can support these efforts.

Scan the QR code to learn more about student mental health services.



# WANT JOB SECURITY? PURSUE NEW CYBERSECURITY BACHELOR'S DEGREE

By **Courtney Morris**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Can a community college give you industry certifications, experience, and a bachelor's degree for an exploding tech field? Check. Check. Check.

Beginning fall 2024, San Jacinto College is offering yet another higher degree at a lower cost: the Bachelor of Applied Technology in information technology with an emphasis in cybersecurity.\*

If you'd enjoy shielding companies from ever-increasing cyberthreats, get the knowledge and skills you need to enter the high-wage, high-demand cybersecurity field.

## Why this new bachelor's degree?

Many students graduate with a bachelor's degree and no experience or have experience but no higher degree, so the Bachelor of Applied Technology meets the top requirements of most cybersecurity job postings.

While many tech companies hire based on skills, some still require a bachelor's degree for good starting positions and better promotions.

"It still remained a barrier for some of our students to promote or even get entry-level positions with less than a bachelor's, so it made sense," said Kevin Morris, South Campus dean of business and technology. "Why don't we cover all the bases?"

San Jac is expanding its cybersecurity training from certificates and an Associate of Applied Science to a bachelor's degree, increasing graduates' marketability and meeting industry need. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 35% job growth in the cybersecurity field from 2021 to 2031 — higher than the average for all occupations.

## What does the program offer?

The Bachelor of Applied Technology program will include...

- Face-to-face and online learning
- Daytime and evening courses
- Entry-level courses available College-wide
- Program-specific courses at the South Campus
- Network security, cryptography, ethical hacking, and broader legal and ethical issues
- Extensive practical application

You may complete the bachelor's degree in two years if you've already earned San Jac's Associate of Applied Science in cybersecurity. A related associate degree — like networking, cloud computing, or help desk — may require some foundational cybersecurity courses.

San Jac's information technology services staff are creating a security operations center at the South Campus Engineering and Technology Center for hands-on, real-life cybersecurity and analytics experience. Whether you're pursuing the associate or bachelor's degree, you'll analyze live data alongside the College's cybersecurity staff to practice monitoring, detecting, and responding to real cyberthreats.

"Students will gain a working understanding of how cybersecurity enables the business to achieve success," said Joshua Dray, San Jac chief information security officer. "This is missing in traditional cybersecurity training, as students are not usually trained to understand how cybersecurity fits into a business context."

The cybersecurity program will also include an optional semester-long internship.

## Why should you pursue this degree?

The College's newest bachelor's degree will give you a flexible pathway to enter the cybersecurity field:

- Start as a security analyst or security operations center analyst
- Specialize in network/cloud security, threat intelligence, incident response, and more
- Advance to high-level positions like chief information security officer

Plus, you'll pay the same tuition as a community college freshman or sophomore for upper-level courses.

If you're looking for versatile training to match a versatile market, look no further. With a cybersecurity degree, you can find a job that aligns with your interests and strengths.

"The demand for cybersecurity experts is expected to continue growing as businesses and governments invest more in digital security," Morris said. "This



program ensures students are well-prepared to enter a field with abundant career prospects."

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac's cybersecurity programs.



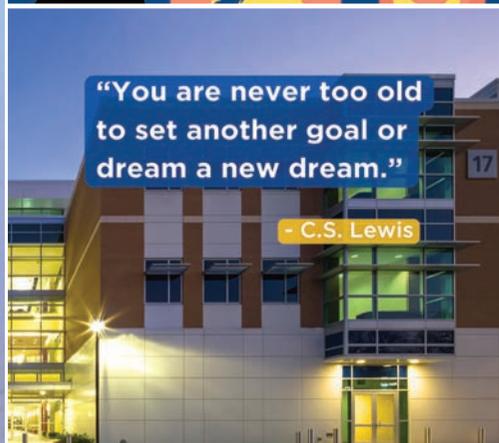
*\*Pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges*

## Secure your future

Cybersecurity jobs are popping up as fast as new cyberthreats, and the field offers plenty of opportunities for career advancement. According to [texaswages.com](https://texaswages.com), information security analysts earn a median annual salary of \$110,512 in the Gulf Coast region.



# THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



## Facebook

“Every woman’s success should be an inspiration to another. We’re strongest when we cheer each other on.” — Serena Williams



54 Reactions | 6 Comments | 8 Shares

## Instagram

At any age, your dreams can become a reality! At San Jac, we take pride in the varied backgrounds of our students and invite adults of all ages to embark on their educational journey with us. What dreams do you plan on pursuing? Let us know in the comments!



224 Likes | 6 Saves

## LinkedIn

Today, we’re taking a moment to express our gratitude to the dedicated faculty and staff at San Jac. Your contributions shape the success of our institution and positively impact our students’ lives. Happy National Employee Appreciation Day - you truly make a difference!



67 Reactions | 1 Comments | 7 Shares

# YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



## SAN JACINTO<sup>SM</sup> COLLEGE

### NORTH CAMPUS

5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston, TX 77049

### 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

### ONLINE

[sanjac.edu/online](https://sanjac.edu/online)

Join San Jacinto College in achieving  
excellence in higher education.

Find your next career:  
[sanjac.edu](https://sanjac.edu) • 281-998-6150

Connect with us on



An Equal Opportunity Institution

## 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](https://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+ by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's. For more information about San Jacinto College, visit [sanjac.edu](https://sanjac.edu).

