

OPPORTUNITY

SAN JACINTO COLLEGESM

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NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

Students rack up Phi Beta Lambda awards

Advisors Helen LaCour and Sherilyn Reynolds accompanied San Jacinto College Central Campus students to the Phi Beta Lambda 2022 National Leadership Conference and Competition June 24-27. Several San Jac students were national winners.

Marcoantonio Rodriguez placed fourth in global analysis and decision making and eighth in future business executive. Isaac Villarreal placed fourth in programming concepts, and Japheth Silva competed in macroeconomics and accounting principles. Rodriguez and Villarreal also served as voting delegates.

State Phi Beta Lambda winners in the Leadership Conference in April 2022 from Central Campus included:

- Rodriguez, first place in global analysis and decision making, second



Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College

- in future business executive, and second in impromptu speaking
- Alberto Gonzalez, first place in microeconomics and fourth in macroeconomics
- Silva, second place in macroeconomics and third in accounting principles
- Villarreal, second place in

- microeconomics and in programming concepts
- Daniela Cangas, fourth place in accounting principles and fifth in macroeconomics

U.S. Under Secretary of Education Kvaal visits College

U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal visited San Jacinto College June 28 for a roundtable discussion and interactive tour of the South Campus Science and Allied Health Building.

“We were honored to host Under Secretary Kvaal to discuss our COVID response, how we assisted students with federal stimulus funds allocated to the

College, and the work we are doing to fill workforce pipelines in our region,” Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer said. “I appreciate his interest in learning more about our students, employees, and training programs.”

Kicking off the visit was a roundtable with College leaders, faculty, and aerospace certificate graduate Cyrus Shy. Kvaal learned not only how the College prepares students for sustainable careers but also how it disbursed nearly \$78.4 million in Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to help students throughout the pandemic.

The discussion focused on how the College is positioned to help students and community moving forward — from expanding the Promise @ San Jac scholarship to partnering with local aerospace, maritime, and health care industries.

Touring the building afterward, Kvaal interacted with faculty and students who are using HEERF-funded equipment to train in physical therapist assistant and nursing programs. He also visited the South Campus Undergraduate Research Center, and an anatomy and physiology lab.

The tour ended with a demonstration of the College’s 3D printing capabilities, which faculty, staff, and students used to print face shield brackets for local health care providers early in the pandemic.

For the under secretary visit photo album, visit bit.ly/under-secretary.



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris

Take the **next step**
in your career!

RN-to-BSN at San Jacinto College

Our RN-to-BSN program is designed for working nurses, so you'll love the flexibility. Complete your practicum where you work and take most of your coursework online.

The deadline to apply to the BSN program is **Jan. 14, 2023**.
Spring classes start **Jan. 17, 2023**.

Learn more at sanjac.edu/BSN.

HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL CHIEF OF STAFF REMAINS SAN JAC PROUD

By Neesha Hosein
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

For Perdita “DiDi” Chavis, determination and perseverance are two key ingredients to success.

Chavis was on a pre-med pathway at Xavier University in New Orleans in the 1980s following high school graduation. After moving to Houston and working to support herself, she decided to return to college as a biology major.

She took classes at San Jacinto College off and on from 1993 to 2015, determined to earn a degree no matter how long it took. After taking art and Spanish courses to transfer to the University of Houston, Chavis learned she’d completed her Associate of Arts in general studies and graduated in fall 2015.

“This was such an exhilarating experience because, at the time, I had no idea how close I was to completion,” she said. “I would encourage anyone to never stop achieving your educational goals — no matter the obstacles, no matter the time, just finish! I cannot think of a better place to earn a degree than San Jac.”

Chavis’ fondest San Jac memory was receiving a scholarship from the biology department. She worked part time while taking classes, and the scholarship helped with books and tuition. Since then, she’s gone on to pursue more than one passion.

From career dreams to reality

Chavis graduated from the University of Houston-Victoria in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in English/concentration in creative writing.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Chavis started her job as chief of staff for the City of Houston Vice Mayor Pro Tem and District K Council Member Martha Castex-Tatum on May 11, 2020.

Meeting constituents’ needs and concerns is the most rewarding part of her job, which includes following and maintaining construction and improvement projects in the district, responding and addressing constituents’ concerns that have not been resolved by city services departments,

communicating new and updated city ordinances, and creating and implementing events and strategies that benefit the communities in the district.

“I chose to work for Houston City Council as chief of staff because I wanted to serve the public on a much grander scale than I did in public education administration,” Chavis said. “I love being there for constituents and helping.”

She said “it helps to have a wonderful and dynamic mentor and boss,” and she loves that every day brings new adventures and matters to address.

Life outside work

“I am proud to have shared the experience of carrying my daughter, Miracle, as one of several stories published in the book ‘Hope Beyond Fibroids,’” she said. “I have written poems and short stories, yet none are

published. I was invited by one of my creative writing professors, Diana Lopez, a published author, to present one of my short stories at the University of Houston-Victoria Undergraduate Interdisciplinary Conference in 2016, and I also helped to edit the UHV GROWL, their creative writing journal.”

Chavis enjoys sewing and has even made her own clothing. She makes customized gifts and crafts using her Cricut. She once sang in a local Houston band from 1997 to 2002 and has performed at weddings and other celebrations.

“I am proud to be an associate member of the Chief of Staff Association, an international organization of professional chiefs of staff,” Chavis said. “This organization allows me to connect, collaborate, and work with influential professionals across the globe!”



Photo courtesy of John Glaser

Why she is San Jac proud

Chavis believes her experience at San Jac contributed to her accomplishments by allowing her to attend an institution with other nontraditional and traditional students alike.

“The diversity of San Jac was refreshing and encouraging,” she said. “I like the programs San Jac offers individuals who want to gain knowledge and skills to be successful in their careers or explore a different career path, and they can do so affordably.”



Photo courtesy of Joe Gatson

SAN JAC STEM, HONORS STUDENTS NOW SET SIGHTS ON RICE

By Courtney Morris

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College STEM honors students will get the boost to finish their associate degrees and transfer to top-tier institutions through the College's new partnership with Rice University.

Now in its pilot year, Rice's **Take Flight STEM Pathway** is for high-achieving San Jac and Lone Star College students exploring science, technology, engineering, and math fields. It has two goals: increasing the number of community college students engaged in STEM and positioning them to pursue higher degrees.

Although Rice doesn't have transfer agreements with other institutions, it could establish one with San Jac by

spring 2023.

Beginning with the fall 2022 class, the College's honors program will identify strong freshmen in STEM programs to pursue Take Flight. Together, San Jac and Rice will expand these students' horizons in STEM education and careers.

Preparing for takeoff

For the past 15 years, Rice has brought talented community college students on campus for summer research experiences for undergraduates, or REUs. Rice faculty who head these REUs encouraged university leaders to expand that partnership.

The seed took root.

In fall 2020, Rice's associate provost Dr. Matthew Taylor, Central Campus department chair of physical sciences

Dr. Rachel Garcia, and Central Campus dean of health and natural sciences Dr. Rhonda Bell began discussing how Rice and San Jac could team to meet the national need for more STEM and diverse graduates.

"Not getting accepted into a four-year school is a common misconception about why students choose to attend community college," Garcia said. "We have high-achieving students with 4.0 GPAs whom we need to serve and help achieve their academic goals."

Rice trustees also wanted to engage with community colleges. The conversation went from helping these students grow their research skills to preparing and positioning them to transfer to institutions like Rice. Although Rice accepts some transfer students, few so far have come from community colleges.

"What the board, provost, and I have put at the forefront is getting the talent from our own backyard," Taylor said. "We have good community colleges in town with good honors programs and first-generation, low-income students. We should look for that talent and develop that talent."

Launching into higher degrees, careers

While completing their associate degrees, San Jac Take Flight students will participate in:

- Virtual information sessions with Rice admissions, engineering and natural science schools, transfer students, and STEM student organizations
- Summer seminars on STEM inquiry and communication skills
- Academic conferences with industry networking opportunities
- A Take Flight day at Rice with visits to a classroom, a residential college, and an undergraduate research symposium



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris

- Research presentation opportunities

Strong students who want to apply for admission to Rice will complete core STEM courses and an associate degree at the College with advising from both schools' faculty and staff. Many will also participate in summer REUs and a summer transition program at Rice.

In Take Flight's pilot phase, six San Jac students participated in Rice REUs this summer. Garcia and Bell thank Rice leaders for supporting this transfer program.

"Take Flight is an excellent program to support student success as they transition from community colleges into research institutions," Bell said.

While Rice might seem financially out of reach for San Jac graduates, the Rice Investment financial aid program promises full tuition, fees, room, and board for students from families with incomes and assets below \$75,000 a year. For incomes below \$140,000, full tuition is covered. For families outside the income ranges, Rice covers 100% of demonstrated need.

"If Rice admits you, that means we believe in you and are committed to removing financial barriers to your ability to afford coming to Rice," Taylor said.

Learn more about Take Flight at sanjac.edu/honors or stempathway.rice.edu.



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris

Beyond Take Flight, San Jac and Rice are partnering on a National Science Foundation AIM for STEM grant, with San Jac math and college prep faculty participating in a summer institute at Rice.

PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP ALLOWS GUERRA TO PURSUE HER PASSION

By **Melissa Trevizo**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College student Serina Guerra has entered her second year at the College, pursuing a degree in psychology. Thanks to the Promise @ San Jac scholarship, she can pursue both her career goals and her passion for music.

“I am so thankful to Promise @ San Jac for the opportunity to attend college

for free,” Guerra said. “On top of my core classes, I was surprised and excited to learn that I could enroll in the steel drum band as part of the scholarship.”

Since Guerra is a first-generation college student, the scholarship has made a big impact on her future.

“I’ve never known what college I wanted to go to. It wasn’t something I thought about very much,” she said. “The Promise pledge encouraged me to

enroll, and I’m so happy I did.”

Thanks to a \$30 million donation from philanthropists MacKenzie Scott and Dan Jewett, the College created a Student Success Fund Endowment to expand Promise @ San Jac scholarships. Now available to every in-district high school graduate, these scholarships cover up to three years of tuition and books so students can earn a degree or certificate debt free.

Pursuing passions

Now a member of the College’s steel drum band, Guerra picked up a set of drumsticks for the first time seven years ago as a student at Park View Intermediate and then at Sam Rayburn High School.

“Serina was a flute player at Park View. She was one of my first students to show a deep interest in steel band,” said Garrett Sanborne, Park View band director. “She especially loved to play lead pan and worked very hard at it. When I wrote new music, I didn’t have to worry because she would master even the most challenging parts.”

Guerra learned quickly and developed a new passion. At Sam Rayburn, she continued to thrive under the direction of Michael Royer.

“I love playing steel drums because it can be very liberating. I take my stress and frustration and put that into playing,” Guerra said. “I was nervous to join the band at San Jac because I hadn’t played for about a year, but you can feel the energy of the group, and you just go for it.”

Guerra is studying to become a pediatric cognitive behavioral psychologist and looking to transfer to the University of Houston-Clear Lake after San Jac.

Become a Promise Partner

Want to help students like Guerra? From the gas pump to the grocery store, you feel the impact of climbing prices, and so do our students. They need your help now more than ever. Become a Promise Partner for as little as \$10/month for five years.

How could this make a difference over five years?

- With \$10/month (\$120/year), you cover half a semester.
- With \$20/month (\$240/year), you cover one semester.
- With \$40/month (\$480/year), you cover two semesters.
- With \$80/month (\$960/year), you cover a student’s associate degree!

Your tax-deductible gift will go toward endowment earnings to pay for Promise Scholars’ tuition. And as a thank-you, you’ll receive a handmade pottery mug to remind you of the part you play in a student’s success story.

To learn more about becoming a Promise Partner, call 281-998-6104 or visit sanjac.edu/promise-partner.



Photo courtesy of Melissa Trevizo



Photo courtesy of Courtney Morris

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

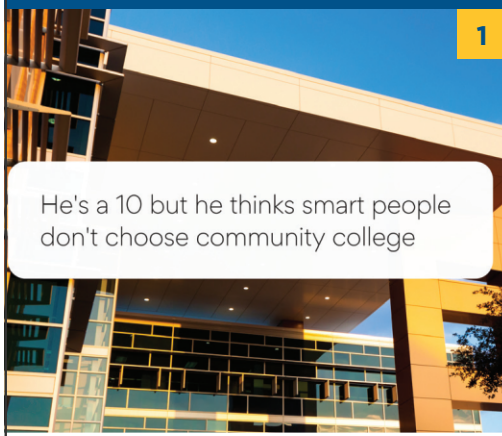
DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Sept. 5	Labor Day holiday	Closed	All campuses, online
Sept. 15 - Oct. 15	Hispanic Heritage Month events	Various	Visit sanjac.edu/hispanic-heritage-month
Sept. 20	Free Industrial/Petrochem Career Fair	4-7 p.m.	Central Campus, CPET (C45)
Sept. 28-29	Fugitive Emissions Summit Americas	All day	CPET/Register: americas.fugitive-emissions-summit.com

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



SAN JACINTO
COLLEGE
Your Goals. Your College.

THIS MONTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA



1 We discussed important dating red flags.



2 Students and employees celebrated the Aspen Institute naming San Jac a finalist for the 2023 prize.



3 The San Jac community showed its pride during LGBTQ Pride Month.



4 The food market reminded students it offers more than just food items.



5 The culinary arts program took us behind the scenes as students prepped for the 60th anniversary gala.

6 Throughout Mental Health Awareness Month, our counselors highlighted the importance of mental health and shared resources available to students.

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GOT AC? YOUTH STAY COOL WITH SUMMER CAMPS

Looking to beat the heat, local youth turned to San Jacinto College for engaging, educational, and mostly air-conditioned summer camps.

For the first time since the pandemic, all San Jac summer camps were available face to face. Camps for ages 6-18 appealed

to interests from athletics and music to career exploration and STEM, while career days for ages 14-18 offered hands-on activities, lab tours, and an inside look at post-certificate/degree job options.

For more camp photos, visit bit.ly/camps-2022.



Photos courtesy of Neesha Hosein, Courtney Morris, and Melissa Trevizo

YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



SAN JACINTOSM 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://www.sanjac.edu/online)

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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 20 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://www.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. San Jacinto College is among the top five community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute for Community College Excellence in 2021 and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually, and 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. San Jacinto College's impact on the region totals \$1.3 billion in added income, which supports 13,044 jobs. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's.