

WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

NEWSLETTER



Dear Leadership Teams,

As we welcome commencements and new beginnings, California community college students are gaining the skills they will need for a lifetime of success. Innovation is taking place in all four corners of the state. In Los Angeles, the BECAP Tides of Transformation Conference pulled industry and workforce development leaders, along with students, to address the growing skills needs in the blue economy. Diablo Valley College's Robotics Technician program is equipping students with practical skills for careers in industrial automation and robotics. And at College of the Desert, regional partners are exploring outcomes from the Eisenhower Health LVN-RN Bridge Program and considering future-forward initiatives like LVN-RN and MA-LVN apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and a potential '3+' medical school model.

As you read through this edition, we hope you'll find inspiration in the stories of progress and partnership from across our community college system. Whether through transformative conferences, policy panels, or simple collaborative connections, the work we do together is shaping a more equitable and opportunity-rich future for all Californians.

Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to advancing opportunities for our students.

Thank you,

Anthony Cordova

Anthony Cordova
Vice Chancellor, Workforce and Economic Development

OUR TEAM

Anthony Cordova

Vice Chancellor, Workforce and Economic Development
acordova@cccoco.edu

LaCandice Ochoa

Dean, Workforce and Economic Development
lochoa@cccoco.edu

Gary W. Adams

Dean, Workforce and Economic Development
gadams@cccoco.edu

Dr. Linda Bermudez, Ed.D.

Dean, Workforce and Economic Development
lbermudez@cccoco.edu

Chèri Fortin

Dean, Workforce and Economic Development
cfortin@cccoco.edu

WEDD PROGRAM UPDATES

Access the latest monthly insights, news and progress reports regarding Workforce and Economic Development on the Program Updates and Newsletters [webpage](#).



California Community Colleges

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

TIDES OF TRANSFORMATION CONFERENCE (BECAP)



(PHOTO - BECAP Tides of Transformation Conference in Los Angeles)

The blue economy is projected to more than double its contribution to global value added, reaching over \$3 trillion by 2030. In Los Angeles County alone, ocean-related industries currently employ over 100,000 workers and generate more than \$13 billion in regional output.

How California responds to advancements in the blue economy could have a significant impact on the state's future economy. To meet this moment, the BECAP Tides of Transformation conference brought together an impressive array of experts focused on advancing blue economy workforce solutions.

A student panel on "Rising Tides" showcased the next generation of climate action leaders, while breakout sessions on aquaculture, underwater robotics, and hydrogen technologies provided deep dives into specific growth areas.

The BECAP initiative is introducing new courses and certificates that are designed to be scalable and adaptable, providing models for other regions aiming to develop similar workforce training initiatives.

ROBOTICS TECHNICIAN GRADUATION (DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE)

In April, Diablo Valley College (DVC) celebrated the graduation of its Robotics Technician program students. California's economy is experiencing a surge in demand for skilled professionals in robotics and automation. The DVC program, developed in partnership with Tesla, emphasizes practical skills and industry partnerships to ensure students are prepared for careers in industrial automation and robotics. Graduates of the program are equipped with skills to build, install, test, and maintain robotic equipment and

automated production systems, aligning with Tesla's workforce needs.



(PHOTO - Tony Cordova and the Diablo Valley College Team)

ALLIED HEALTH/NURSING CAMPUS VISIT (COLLEGE OF THE DESERT)

In May, the WEDD team visited College of the Desert to get an in-person look at the college's nursing department and advancement of allied health education.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) projects that California will experience a shortage of approximately 63,720 full-time registered nurses (RNs) by 2030. This shortage is influenced by factors such as an aging population requiring more healthcare services and a significant portion of the nursing workforce approaching retirement. Moreover, A 2021 analysis by California Competes highlights an anticipated annual shortage of up to 37,000 allied health workers.

Roundtable discussions took place bringing together regional partners to explore outcomes from the Eisenhower Health LVN-RN Bridge Program, strategies for HRTF and RNI grants to support equipment and space expansion, and future-forward initiatives like LVN-RN and MA-LVN apprenticeships, dual enrollment, and a potential '3+' medical school model. The visit concluded with an open discussion focused on collaboration, funding, and strategic planning in effort to continuously improve the nursing program.



(PHOTOS - Tony Cordova and LaCandice Ochoa visiting College of the Desert)

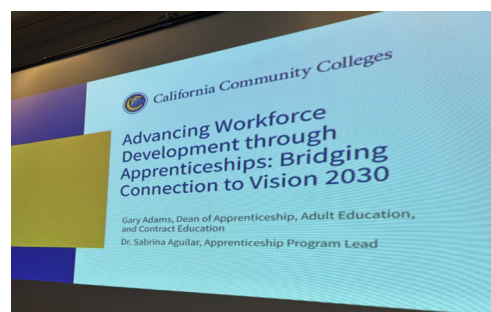
APPRENTICESHIPS

2025 COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA ANNUAL TRUSTEES CONFERENCE

In May, the WEDD Team attended the 2025 Community College League of California Annual Trustees Conference, where statewide leaders convened to explore strategies that enhance student success through innovation, equity, and workforce development.

Gary Adams and Sabrina Aguilar led a session exploring how California community colleges are aligning apprenticeship programs with industry needs. California community colleges are playing a crucial role in the State of California's goal of training 500,000 apprentices by 2029. To date, there are more than 96,000 registered apprentices in the system; approximately 20% of the goal, with four years still to go. Their session highlighted best practices and actionable solutions to ensure students gain the skills and credentials necessary to thrive in today's evolving job market.

To learn more, visit the [2025 Annual Conference website](#).



(PHOTOS - Gary Adams, Sabrina Aguilar, and Javier Cazares at the 2025 Annual Conference)

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Sacramento

MICHAEL RICO - University of Iron (Sacramento Training Office)



(PHOTO -Michael Rico, Student)

In a [YouTube video](#) with nearly 6 million views, a slinger pulls a hot iron rivet from the cook with his tongs and then tosses it 20 or so feet to the buckler. The buckler catches the rivet in a metal cone and dumps it off to the riveters, who place it in a hole on a steel I-beam andpeen it into place with a pneumatic hammer.

All this “slinging,” “bucking” and “peening” is being carried out by students of the University of Iron in a demonstration of an obsolete—yet instructive—technique that was the standard for the construction of most of the huge projects of the Industrial Revolution, everything from ships to skyscrapers. The Eiffel Tower, for example, is held together with 2.5 million such rivets.

“We were doing a simulation of what it used to be like, and it went viral,” says Michael Rico, an apprentice ironworker enrolled in the program and who was in the class in the video.

The University of Iron is a four-year program that places students in paid internships while they attend approximately 200 hours of classes per year at one of nine campuses across the state. Upon completion, graduates are certified journeymen ironworkers. Coursework completed in the apprenticeship programs counts for credits toward degree programs at community colleges in the state, including American River College and Cosumnes River College in the Sacramento area.

Rico came to the school's Sacramento training center having already worked in the field as a welder and was given credit for his previous experience. "They started me off right in the middle. ... I was an ironworker already for a non-union company," he says. "I just have to do a few more of my core classes and I can become a journeyman."

Those classes are on pause for the moment, however, as Rico and his wife are staying close to home to take care of their firstborn child. But even though he's yet to graduate, Rico is already reaping the benefits of his pursuit of an ironworker career. As an Ironworkers Union apprentice, his family gets full insurance coverage, which proved crucial during his daughter's recent birth. "She was free," Rico says. "We [had to stay] in the hospital at Stanford two nights and three days, and my insurance covered everything."

Before he joined the University of Iron, Rico learned the skills needed for his previous job in the welding program at Butte College.

The University of Iron is one of the programs under the umbrella of the California Apprenticeship Coordinators Association, offering training in the classroom and on-the-job in dozens of fields—from ironworking to meat cutting.

When he finishes with University of Iron, Rico says he'd like to do more work alongside big cranes ("I got to do a job with cranes at the Port of Stockton, and it was a lot of fun."), as well as eventually move into inspection work. "The union helps you get your certified welding inspector's card," he says. "That's a big deal; that's a hard test to pass. If I can do that, then I can try and be an ironworker who does quality control."

For more information on the University of Iron visit universityofiron.org, and for info on other apprenticeship opportunities in the state, go to calapprenticeship.org. Find out more about the CCC's Apprenticeship Pathways project at the Vision 2030 website: ccc.edu/About-Us/Vision-2030.

Bakersfield College

RICHARD VAN HORN



(PHOTO -Richard Van Horn, Student)

Bakersfield College bachelor's graduate fast-tracked his path to high-paying career in industrial automation.

Growing up with a mother who had a doctorate and a father teaching high school, Richard Van Horne always figured his educational career would follow a traditional path, culminating with credentials from a four-year university. What he didn't expect was that his degree—a Bachelor's of Science in industrial automation—would be earned at community college.

Now, Van Horne is earning a six-figure salary in a field that he didn't even know existed until he enrolled at Bakersfield College. He graduated in 2018 as one of BC's first seven industrial automation graduates.

"This partnership between my personality and brain and this degree of knowledge is the biggest game-changing decision I've ever made," Van Horne says.

Now 31, Van Horne was a 22-year-old part-time truck driver making \$12.50 an hour when he found out that Bakersfield was launching what was then the nation's first and only bachelor's program in industrial automation, whether it was in a community college or any of the nation's four-year colleges.

Bakersfield College and other institutions in the California Community College system are offering more opportunities to earn bachelor's degrees as part of the Baccalaureate Degree Program (BDP). This initiative ties into Vision 2030, a collaborative action plan overseen by the California Community College's Chancellor's Office aimed at making education more equitable, accessible and affordable.

Richard Van Horn Story Continued...

A Bakersfield native, Van Horne's mother worked as faculty director at the college. Unsurprisingly, he enrolled at Bakersfield out of high school and earned an Associate of Arts degree two years later in political science. From there, his plan was to go on to Cal State Bakersfield for his bachelor's. Then, as it happens so often, life got in the way.

Van Horne dropped out of BC when an unplanned pregnancy forced him to get a job. Three years later, he found himself driving truck in Oceanside. That's when he learned about and enrolled in the fledgling industrial automation program at his hometown community college.

The next thing Van Horne knew, he was tackling calculus and chemistry on his way to major-specific courses such as industrial design, system-robotics, project management, economic decision making and industrial and organizational psychology.

"Mostly," Van Horne says of the theory of industrial automation, "it's about doing the most work in the least amount of time, making the production process quicker and more efficient."

With his degree in hand, Van Horne went to work as an engineering and maintenance manager for big farms and firms in the Central Valley before latching on this year as the electrical and instrumentation supervisor for GAF, the New Jersey-based, worldwide leader in the manufacture of roofing shingles.

With climate-charged hurricanes causing destruction throughout the southeastern United States, Van Horne is putting his skills to good use for customers who need repairs and is earning \$115,000 a year working for the GAF plant in Shafter.

And he's only getting started. "I want to be the general manager of a plant," Van Horne says. "I think I can be that kind of a general manager of a large facility, or maybe even a director at the corporate level." The game-changer, he'll always know, came from his local community college.

For more information about Bakersfield College's Industrial Automation program, visit <https://www.bakersfieldcollege.edu/academics/pathways/itt/industrial-automation/index.html>.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

Do you have a success story you would like to share with us? We would love to hear about it! Use this form to submit your story for our growing list of students who are making a difference and achieve greatness as they continue their journey after attending our incredible community colleges.

A screenshot of a web form titled "California Community Colleges SUCCESS STORY". The form is titled "Add a Success Story" and includes instructions: "Please use this form to add a student success story to our collection!". It shows a login section with the email "erin.gibb@arraywest.com" and a "Switch account" link. Below this, it states: "The name and photo associated with your Google account will be recorded when you upload files and submit this form. Only the email you enter is part of your response." There is a red asterisk indicating required questions. The form has two visible input fields: "Email *" and "Program Type *".

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

Use this [form](#) to submit your story to the story bank!

IMPACTFUL PROJECTS

UCLA LATINO POLICY & POLITICS INSTITUTE

How is Automation Reshaping the Future of Work for Latino Workers?

On April 10, UCLA's Latino Policy & Politics Institute hosted a timely and insightful webinar on how automation is reshaping the future of work for Latino workers in California. With industries such as agriculture, trucking, construction, and food service undergoing rapid technological shifts, the event highlighted both the challenges and opportunities facing Latino communities. As automation accelerates in sectors like agriculture, trucking, construction, and food service, Latino workers are among the most affected. The event unpacked the implications for job security, upward mobility, and the policy responses needed for a more equitable digital economy.

MORE IMPACTFUL PROJECTS

UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute Continued...

The webinar opened with UCLA sharing the findings of their new report, *On the Frontlines: Automation Risks for Latino Workers in California*. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion on workforce development strategies and policy solutions. Experts from the labor, education, policy, and career training sectors will share insights on addressing economic challenges and opportunities posed by automation and engaged in a live Q&A session with attendees.

The panel included:

- **Amanda Bergson-Shilcock**, Senior Fellow, National Skills Coalition
- **Anthony Cordova**, Vice Chancellor of Workforce and Economic Development, California Community College
- **Kimberly Rosenberger**, Senior Government Relations Advocate, SEIU California
- **Jie Zong**, Senior Research Analyst, LPPI
- **Misael Galdámez**, Senior Research Analyst, LPPI

To learn more, visit the [UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute](#)

UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Institute

Automation Risks for Latino Workers in California

Automation is rapidly transforming industries across California, disproportionately affecting Latino workers who are overrepresented in occupations such as agriculture, trucking, construction, and food service.

Join us for a webinar discussing the findings of our new report, *On the Frontlines: Automation Risks for Latino Workers in California*.

Webinar via Zoom
April 10, 2025
10:00 AM PT | 1:00 PM ET

The presentation will be followed by a panel discussion on workforce development strategies and policy solutions.

PANELISTS

 AMANDA BERGSON-SHILCOCK SENIOR FELLOW, NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION	 ANTHONY CORDOVA VICE CHANCELLOR, CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	 KIMBERLY ROSENBERGER SENIOR GOVERNMENT RELATIONS ADVOCATE, SEIU	 JIE ZONG SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST, UCLA LPPI	 MISAEAL GALDÁMEZ SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST, UCLA LPPI
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REGISTER HERE

WORKCON



(PHOTO -2025 WorkCon Event)

At the end of April, the WEDD Team participated in the Spring WORKCON 2025 conference, *Strength in Change: Resilience for the Future*, in Costa Mesa. This conference was hosted and designed by the California Workforce Association and showcased innovative and strategic collaborations, partnerships, program ideas, and principles that highlight the remarkable work of California's Workforce Development Boards, Community-Based Organizations, Educational entities, WIOA partners, and those invested in the success of their local communities and the people who live in them.

The conference focused on innovative programs, partnerships, and the impact of AI and technology on the changing economy. It also emphasized the innovative programs and uses for WIOA funds, and the various funds available through strategic partnerships along with an emphasis on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Advocacy in the programs we administer.

Dr. Sabrina Aguilar from the WEDD team hosted a session entitled *Pathways to Careers for Opportunity and Justice-Involved Populations*, with Dr. Ken Spence from NextGen Policy. Vice Chancellor Cordova was a member of the panel on *Statewide Partnerships for Pathways to High Paying, Great Careers in California* with Labor Secretary Stewart Knox, hosted by Kaina Pereira of CWDB. The panel discussed California Jobs First and The California Master Plan for Career Education bringing Local Workforce Development Boards, Community Colleges, education, and economic development together to grow career opportunities and state-wide prosperity. The full list of panelists included: Curtis Notsinneh, Derek Kirk, Dave Thoeny, Erick Serrato, and Tamia Brown. To learn more about this conference, visit the California Workforce Association's [website](#).



California Community Colleges