

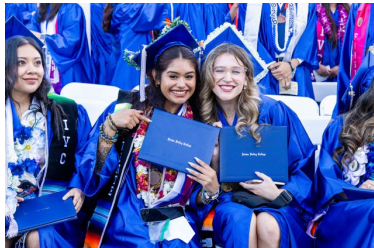
TO: Julianna M. Barnes, Ed.D., Chancellor, and Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: John C. Hernandez, Ph.D., President

DATE: June 11, 2026

SUBJECT: **President's Report for the June 22, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting**

IVC Celebrates 41st Annual Commencement Ceremony



IVC held its 41st annual Commencement Ceremony, celebrating the achievements of the Class of 2026. The ceremony honored the conferral of 5,196 certificates and degrees, including 1,525 certificates of achievement and 3,671 associate degrees. More than 500 students registered to participate in this year's ceremony. The graduating class included 441 Honors Program students, and 41 Early College graduates from Beckman High School, the largest Early College cohort since the program launched in 2007. IVC also recognized graduates earning academic distinction, including 450 cum laude, 488 magna cum laude, and 215 summa cum laude honorees. This year's ceremony introduced a new tradition recognizing IVC employees whose loved ones were among the graduating class, highlighting the family and community connections that make commencement meaningful. View photos [here](#).

President Hernandez Honored with 4CS Excellence in Servant Leadership Award



From June 3-5, IVC Classified Senate sent a delegation of 14 classified professionals to the California Community Colleges Classified Senate (4CS) Annual Classified Leadership Institute. President John Hernandez was invited to keynote the opening of the conference, where he spoke to classified leaders from across the state about service, excellence, and the collective commitment to student success. During the conference, Dr. Hernandez was also honored by 4CS with this year's Excellence in Servant Leadership Award. The recognition was especially meaningful as it reflected both his long-standing respect for classified professionals and the nomination submitted by the IVC Classified Senate. His remarks highlighted the value of serving others with compassion and the many colleagues who continue to inspire service-centered leadership each day.

IVC Honors Student's Artwork Featured in "Scribendi" Volume 40



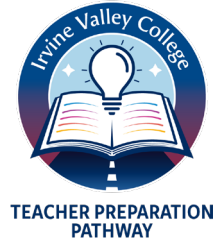
IVC Honors Program student Kimia Seifi was selected for publication in the [2026 issue of "Scribendi,"](#) the flagship literary and arts publication of the Western Regional Honors Council. Seifi's visual art piece, "Pho Dollars," was featured in the annual publication that celebrates creative work by undergraduate Honors students across the country. Founded in 1985, "Scribendi" has grown into a nationally recognized publication featuring poetry, creative nonfiction, visual art, photography, and other media from Honors students representing a wide range of academic backgrounds and perspectives. Seifi's publication reflected the creativity, talent, and academic excellence fostered through IVC's Honors Program and highlighted the college's continued support for student achievement in the arts and humanities.

Healthcare Pathways Ceremony Celebrates Student Success and Regional Collaboration



On June 2, IVC and its regional partners celebrated students in the English Language Learners (ELL) Healthcare Pathways program, recognizing their completion of training and next steps into externships, new positions, and careers in healthcare. The ceremony honored the resilience, determination, and achievements of adult multilingual immigrant students whose language skills, cultural knowledge, and lived experiences will help strengthen trust and improve patient and family care across the region. The initiative reflects an extraordinary partnership between IVC, Saddleback College, Coastline ROP, College and Career Advantage, and the Irvine, Laguna Beach, and Tustin Adult Schools. Together, these agencies collaborated on grant applications, professional development, conference presentations, reporting, and the sharing of best practices to expand pathways into high-demand healthcare careers. This celebration underscored IVC's commitment to student success, workforce development, and meaningful community partnerships.

IVC Selected for Statewide Teacher Preparation Community of Practice



IVC Teacher Preparation Pathway and School of the Arts have been selected to participate in a year-long Community of Practice focused on strengthening California's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) teacher preparation pipeline. The Community of Practice is being convened through the Arts Ed Accelerator Fund and the California Department of Education Foundation, in partnership with The Residency Lab. IVC will work alongside a statewide cohort of diverse organizations representing higher education, county offices of education, school districts, private institutions, teacher unions, and community-based arts organizations. This opportunity is timely as the Arts & Music in Schools Act, also known as Proposition 28, continues to expand investment in arts education while increasing the need for well-prepared VAPA educators across California. As part of this year-long effort, IVC will participate in monthly convenings from June 2026 through June 2027, engage in cross-site collaboration, share data and promising practices, and contribute to field-level learning around VAPA teacher certification pathways. The work will culminate in an in-person convening with policy leaders and partner organizations in June 2027. IVC will receive a \$75,000 grant to support its participation and implementation efforts.

Guided Pathways Expands Student Engagement Through Academic, Career, and Support Initiatives



Find Your Path

Guided Pathways at IVC has continued to innovate by deepening the integration of Instruction and Student Services to better connect students with clear educational pathways and comprehensive support. The Third Annual Humanities Showcase featured three connected events that linked students to community and real-world experiences: the National Poetry Day Reading and Open Mic, a job mixer with community professionals, and student showcase presentations. The second Majors to Careers Fair generated strong engagement with 411 students participating. The Interest Area Village returned during Preview Night, with every school represented by discipline faculty and student support teams. The panel "Breaking Barriers: Inspiring the Future of Women in STEM" had its second appearance at Preview Night. New this year, a Preview of Performing Arts, featuring three breakout sessions highlighting performing and visual arts programs. Additionally, the Strategic Enrollment Management workgroup and Guided Pathways leads collaborated to launch "The Adult Learner Experience: Returning to College at IVC," further supporting adult learner engagement. This spring also marked the launch of the Student Support Roadshow, a recurring series that provides faculty and staff with accessible opportunities to learn about student services.

IVC Dance Students Perform in “LEGENDS” at Segerstrom Center for the Arts



The Dance Department participated in “LEGENDS,” an original musical production presented at Segerstrom Center for the Arts on May 30. IVC Dance collaborated with the South Coast Chinese Cultural Center on a large-scale cultural production that brought Chinese mythology to life through music, dance, martial arts, theatrical storytelling, and multimedia design. Twelve IVC dance students were selected to perform on the prestigious Segerstrom Hall stage. Under the choreography and direction of Professor Jennifer La Curan, students performed and worked alongside professional musicians, artists, and performers from around the world. This opportunity provided students with hands-on experience in a professional-level production while deepening their understanding of Chinese cultural traditions through performance.

IVC Puente Celebrates Student Success, Transfer Achievement, and Community Engagement



During the final weeks of the spring semester, IVC Puente celebrated a year of student achievement, community building, and cultural engagement. The program recognized Puente graduates who earned admission to several leading UC, CSU, and four-year universities, congratulated Cohort 5 students for completing their first year of college, and honored the 2025-2026 Puente Student Ambassadors for their commitment to the campus and learning community. To conclude the

academic year, IVC Puente hosted a final educational trip to San Diego. Students visited Chicano Park, where they learned about the site’s rich history and cultural significance, before touring San Diego State University and exploring its academic opportunities. Puente Scholar Coral Santos also exemplified the program’s emphasis on leadership and advocacy. This spring, Santos participated in the Youth Climate Summit and secured an internship with Cool Irvine, reflecting Puente’s continued impact in supporting student transfer, leadership, advocacy, and belonging.

IVC Studio Art Professor Selected for Prestigious U.S. Mint Design Opportunity



IVC part-time Studio Art Professor [Chris Polentz](#) received a prestigious national honor after being selected to create artwork for the U.S. Mint’s Artistic Infusion Program. Polentz was one of only 25 new American artists invited to join the program through a national Call for Artists, with selections based on the artistic merit of applicants’ professional portfolios. The highly competitive program brings together accomplished artists from across the country to help shape the visual legacy of U.S. coins and medals. Through this rare opportunity, Polentz designed the 2025 American Liberty High Relief Gold Coin and 2025 American Liberty Silver

Medal, placing his work among the official artistic designs issued by the United States Mint. His designs were minted in both gold and silver, marking a significant professional milestone and bringing national recognition to his creative work. This achievement highlighted the caliber of IVC faculty and the real-world expertise they brought into the classroom, inspiring students through their continued contributions to the arts and creative industries. Learn more about Professor Polentz’s design and the 2025 American Liberty High Relief Gold Coin and Silver Medal on the [U.S. Mint website](#).

IVC Alumna Nitasha Kaur Sawhney Reappointed to FoundationCCC Board of Directors



In May 2026, IVC alumna Nitasha Kaur Sawhney was reappointed to the Foundation for California Community Colleges Board of Directors for a second four-year term, serving through May 2030. The appointment was approved by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, recognizing Sawhney's continued leadership, legal expertise, and commitment to advancing equity and student success across the state's 116 community colleges. Sawhney has served on the FoundationCCC Board since May 2022 and currently serves on the Board Executive Committee and as Chair of the DEI Board Advisory Committee. In these roles, she has helped strengthen governance, compliance, risk oversight, and equity-centered organizational strategy. Sawhney is an equity partner at Garcia Hernández Sawhney, LLP, where she specializes in education, labor, and employment law. Sawhney's connection to community colleges began as a student leader at IVC. While attending the college, she served as an ASIVC Senator in 1994 and as the SOCCCD Student Trustee in 1995. She was also a member of the Alpha Gamma Sigma and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Societies, graduating with honors in 1995 with an Associate in Arts degree. Her continued statewide service reflects the lasting impact of IVC's commitment to student leadership, civic engagement, and equitable educational opportunity.

IVC Observes Memorial Day with Campus Moment of Silence



IVC's Veterans Services Center hosted a Memorial Day observance on May 20 to honor the service members who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the nation. Led by Director of the Veterans Services Center Dylan Bender, the ceremony invited the campus community to gather for a moment of silence and reflection. The observance highlighted the significance of Memorial Day as a time to remember the bravery, selflessness, and enduring legacy of fallen service members. Participants were also invited to reflect on the meaning of the Buddy Poppy, a symbol rooted in the battlefields of World War I that represents sacrifice, remembrance, and the lasting bond shared by those who serve. The event served as a solemn reminder of the college community's shared responsibility to honor the stories and sacrifices of those who gave their lives for freedom. View photo [here](#).

Summer Serpas Selected as Inaugural First-Year Success Fellow



On May 20, Strong Start to Finish named IVC Professor of English Summer Serpas one of six leaders selected for its inaugural cohort of First-Year Success Fellows. The national fellowship recognizes state policymakers, faculty, and academic leaders working to remove barriers to student success during the critical first year of college, with a focus on helping students complete gateway math and English courses. Serpas was selected for her leadership in advancing evidence-based remediation reform and supporting students in completing transfer-level English within their first year. A frequent presenter on California's AB 705 implementation, she has led campus-level reform efforts at IVC and supported statewide professional development through her work with the California Acceleration Project. Over the next year, the Fellows will brief policymakers and state leaders, engage faculty and practitioners, and help elevate proven strategies that improve student outcomes.

Desiree Ortiz Named 2026 California Community Colleges Classified Employee of the Year



On May 19, Senior Administrative Assistant Desiree Ortiz was honored as one of six recipients of the 2026 California Community Colleges Classified Employee of the Year Award. Presented by the California Community Colleges Board of Governors, this statewide recognition celebrates classified professionals whose leadership, dedication, and service advance the goals of Vision 2030 and strengthen student success across the system. Ortiz has served the South

Orange County Community College District for more than 21 years, contributing her talents across multiple departments, including Financial Aid and Police Services. At IVC, she has demonstrated a deep commitment to equity, inclusion, and student-centered service. Her contributions include leadership in Caring Campus, co-founding a classified Guided Pathways team, supporting first-generation student programs, and advocating for classified professionals through her role as CSEA president and statewide contributor. Ortiz's achievement reflects the vital role classified professionals play in creating welcoming, equitable, and supportive learning environments for students.

IVC Foundation Celebrates Student Achievement During Annual Scholarship Award Ceremony



On May 15, IVC hosted its 41st Scholarship Awards Ceremony, bringing together students, donors, and the campus community to recognize outstanding student achievement, leadership, and perseverance. Through the generosity of the IVC Foundation, 365 students received 625 scholarships totaling \$735,650, representing a 26% increase from last year.

Students also received \$269,128 in awards from external partners, as well as \$29,546 in emergency funds. Altogether, these resources provided more than \$1,050,000 in direct student support, marking the highest total in the college's history. The celebration reflected the powerful role of philanthropy and community partnership in reducing financial barriers and advancing student success at IVC. View photos [here](#).

IVC Hosts Inaugural First-Generation Graduate Celebration



On May 12, IVC hosted its inaugural First-Generation Graduate Celebration, bringing together first-generation graduates, campus leaders, and supporters for an evening of recognition, reflection, and community. Hosted by President of the First-Generation Student Club Sophia Diaz, the celebration honored the resilience, determination, and academic achievements of students who are creating new

opportunities for themselves, their families, and future generations. Graduates received IVC First-Gen stoles, symbolizing their perseverance, achievement, and the meaningful path they have forged as first-generation college students. The evening included dinner, remarks from Vice President for Student Services Dr. Martha McDonald, and President John Hernandez. Diaz shared a heartfelt message about the courage it takes to ask for help, find community, and recognize that no student succeeds alone. This inaugural celebration reflects IVC's commitment to fostering belonging, honoring student success, and supporting first-generation students as they continue to achieve important educational milestones. View photos [here](#).

Professor Deanna Valdez Recognized as Teacher of the Year



On May 12, representatives from the Office of Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris, representing California's 73rd Assembly District, visited IVC to present Professor Deanna Valdez with a Teacher of the Year recognition. The honor celebrated Professor Valdez's dedication to teaching, student success, and the meaningful impact she has made in the classroom and across the IVC community. Her recognition reflected the excellence of IVC faculty and the important role educators play in inspiring students to achieve their academic and personal goals. Congratulations to Professor Valdez on this well-deserved recognition.

IVC Honors Program Celebrates Graduating Transfer Students



On May 8, the IVC Honors Program hosted its annual Awards Ceremony, celebrating 441 students who completed the program's requirements and are transferring. Honors Program Coordinator Emily Liu welcomed guests and introduced the afternoon's program, followed by congratulatory remarks from President John Hernandez. During the ceremony, Honors Counselor Brad Conrad was recognized as Honors Advocate of the Year for his support of Honors students. Graduating students were invited to the podium to share their intended transfer institutions and reflect on what they gained from their time at IVC. Each student received an IVC Honors medallion from President Hernandez, symbolizing their completion of a rigorous academic curriculum and their commitment to intellectual growth. The event also featured remarks from Honors Program Student Council President Sara Kabbara. Surrounded by family, friends, faculty, and staff, students celebrated an important milestone in their academic journeys. View photos [here](#).

Beckman Early College Graduates Celebrated at Annual Breakfast



IVC hosted the Early College Breakfast on May 7 to recognize 41 graduating seniors from Beckman High School who completed associate degrees and/or Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) certification through the Early College Program. President John Hernandez congratulated the students for the dedication, discipline, and perseverance required to complete both high school and college coursework. This year's class represented one of the largest cohorts since the program began in 2007. The class earned a total of 72 associate degrees, with several students completing multiple degrees while still in high school. Since its launch, more than 360 students have completed the program, demonstrating the strength of the partnership between Tustin Unified School District and IVC and the impact of providing students an early start on their college journey. View photos [here](#).

IVC Esports League of Legends Team Qualifies for National Finals



The IVC Esports League of Legends team qualified to compete in the PlayVS College League National Finals in Waco, Texas, marking a major milestone for the college's growing esports program. The team earned an 8th place national ranking, putting IVC among the leading collegiate programs in the country and providing students the opportunity to compete against major colleges on a national stage. This achievement reflects the dedication, teamwork, and competitive growth of IVC's student-athletes. The League of Legends team's national recognition demonstrates the continued impact and momentum of the college's esports program.

IVC Model United Nations Hosts Spring 2026 Global Policy Forum



IVC's Model United Nations team hosted its semi-annual Global Policy Forum on May 5, bringing together more than 65 participants to debate the question, "Is Violating State Sovereignty Justified to Secure Human Rights?" The event provided new team members with an opportunity to strengthen their public speaking, research, critical thinking, and teamwork skills. Throughout the debate, students presented arguments on the complex relationship between state sovereignty and the protection of human rights. Audience members contributed to the discussion through questions that deepened the conversation and encouraged further reflection on global policy challenges. At the conclusion of the debate, attendees voted on which team presented the more convincing argument, resulting in a rare tie. The Global Policy Forum continues to serve as an engaging learning opportunity that promotes global citizenship, civic dialogue, and student leadership at IVC. A captioned recording of the event is available [here](#).

IVC Students Present Research at the Bay Honors Symposium at Stanford



Twenty IVC Honors students presented 15 research projects at the prestigious [Bay Honors Symposium](#), hosted by the Bay Honors Consortium at Stanford University on May 2. IVC students' topics included the risks of heart disease for women, native bee diversity and floral associations on California college campuses, and gender bias in automatic speech recognition systems. Neth Sagara was awarded the Heslet Award for his STEM project on "Modeling Light Transport in fNIRS: Comparing Homogeneous and Layered Approaches." The Symposium was also attended by English Professor and Honors Coordinator Emily Liu, Math Professor Lan Pham, Biology Professor Justin Wright, and Computer Science Professor Michael Salviani, all of whom mentored student research and served as faculty moderators at the Symposium.

IVC Students Participate in the 26th Annual HTCC Community College Honors Research Conference



Sixty-six IVC students, supported by the IVC Honors Program, participated in the 26th Annual [Honors Transfer Council of California \(HTCC\) Research Conference](#) at UC Riverside on March 28. IVC students delivered 39 oral and 23 poster presentations, comprising 62 of the 290 research projects presented. Under the guidance of IVC faculty mentors, students worked to conduct research, write proposal abstracts, and prepare their posters or oral presentations. Raaga Mahesh, Jessica Fisher, and Yen Kim Duong won an Outstanding Poster Award for their project, "Silent Roots, Enduring Branches: How Childhood Social Support Circles Influence Adult Romantic Participation." Kate Lay won an Outstanding Poster Award for "Pink Donut Boxes and Genocide: Cambodian Americans' Narrative Through Art." Additionally, Ninja Friberg was awarded the HTCC Exemplary Achievement Award, and Lucienne Sue was received the prestigious HTCC Juan Lara Exemplary Achievement Award. Ten additional IVC students participated in the conference by volunteering to moderate Q&A during oral presentation sessions, and IVC Honors Coordinator Emily Liu served as the Conference Chair in her role as Vice President of the Honors Transfer Council of California.

IVC Music Students Recognized at 12th Annual Composers' Competition



At the 12th Annual IVC Music Composers' Competition, IVC Music students Jay Huang, Alex Tehrani, and Christina Yoon were recognized for their outstanding original compositions, earning First, Second, and Third Prize honors. Huang received First Prize and a \$300 award for "Autumn Breath in the Halls," written for string orchestra and harp, and "Dawn of the Radiant Banner," written for full orchestra. Tehrani received Second Prize and a \$200 award for "Still Standing," written for cello and piano, and "Echoes of Freedom," written for trumpet, alto saxophone, and horns in F. Yoon received Third Prize and a \$100 award for "Oh That I Had the Wings of a Dove," written for mixed choir and piano. David Nguyen also received special mention for "Mushroom Concerto" (Movement I), written for full orchestra. Special thanks to judges Dr. Susan Boettger, Professor Mathieu Girardet, and Dr. Matthew Tresler for supporting this meaningful celebration of student creativity. The competition highlighted the exceptional talent of IVC's music students and reflected the college's ongoing commitment to artistic excellence and student achievement. Learn more [here](#).

IVC Men's Tennis Leads State Rankings Following Championship Season



IVC men's tennis capped an outstanding season by earning the No. 1 team ranking in the final California Community College Athletic Association rankings released by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. The recognition followed the Lasers' second consecutive 3C2A team title and fifth state championship in program history. Several IVC student-athletes also earned top individual rankings.

Freshman Philip Neuman, who captured the state singles championship in Ojai, was ranked No. 1 in singles, while freshman teammate Steven Anderson was ranked No. 2. Neuman defeated Anderson in the state championship singles final, and both players were named ITA All-Americans. In doubles, IVC's sophomore duo of Nevin McCann and Bradley Yung earned the No. 1 state ranking after winning the 3C2A doubles title. Neuman and Anderson were ranked fourth after reaching the state doubles semifinals, while sophomore Jonathan Hinkel and freshman Richard Petery finished eighth in the final doubles rankings. Under Head Coach Ross Duncan, the Lasers finished the season with a 14-1 overall record, reinforcing IVC's continued excellence in athletics and student achievement.

Matt Mowers Continues Basketball Career at Rogers State



IVC men's basketball standout Matt Mowers committed to Rogers State University, an NCAA Division II program in Oklahoma, continuing his academic and athletic career after two impressive seasons with the Lasers. A two-year starter and two-time All-Orange Empire Conference selection, Mowers earned first-team honors for the second consecutive season in 2025-26 while helping lead IVC to a 17-13 overall record and a berth in the Southern California Regional playoffs. The 6-foot-6 sophomore post player from Trabuco Hills High School averaged 15.3 points, 6.6 rebounds, and 2.4 assists while shooting 58.1 percent from the field during the 2025-26 season. He scored in double figures in 20 games, including five contests with 20 or more points, showcasing his strong offensive presence around the basket and tough defensive play. Over his two-year IVC career, Mowers played in 58 games, started 40, and averaged 14.4 points and 6.4 rebounds per game. Mowers joined a Rogers State program that finished 21-11 overall and advanced to the regional quarterfinals, underscoring the strong foundation he built at IVC and the continued success of Laser student-athletes at the next level.

President's Report to the Board of Trustees

June 11, 2026

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Upcoming Events

President's Annual State of the College

August 10 at 2 pm

[Professional Development \(Flex\) Week](#)

August 10-14

Laser Day, IVC's New Student Welcome

August 12

Instruction Begins

August 17

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Hernandez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

John C. Hernandez, Ph.D.

President