

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

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

**DATE:** September 18, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **President's Report for the September 29, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting**

#### **IVC Named Great College to Work For® Fourth Consecutive Year**



IVC has been recognized as one of the nation's best colleges to work for, earning a place on the 2025 Great Colleges to Work For® list. This year, 199 institutions participated in the national survey, with 76 colleges and universities achieving recognition, including 22 two-year colleges. IVC also earned Honor Roll distinction for the fourth consecutive year, placing it among the top four two-year colleges in the nation, recognized the greatest number of times across multiple categories within its size group. The results, released on September 19 in a special insert of "The Chronicle of Higher Education" and on [GreatCollegesList.com](http://GreatCollegesList.com), reflect IVC's commitment to creating a supportive and empowering workplace environment that directly contributes to student success.

#### **IVC Hosts 2025 Veteran Health and Wellness Conference**



##### **Veterans Services Center**

IVC hosted the 2025 Veteran Health and Wellness Conference, a collaborative event dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of veterans and military-connected students on September 18. The conference featured keynote speakers, interactive workshops, and breakout sessions on topics such as mental health, holistic wellness, financial readiness, and navigating benefits and resources. Vice President for Student Services Martha McDonald opened the event with a warm welcome, highlighting the college's ongoing commitment to serving veterans and their families. This event reinforced IVC's role as a trusted partner in advancing the health, wellness, and educational success of the veteran community by engaging and collaborating with community partners who shared valuable insights, resources, and services to strengthen the support network available to veterans.

#### **Latinx Heritage Month Celebration at IVC**



On September 17, IVC hosted a Latinx Heritage Month Celebration bringing students, faculty, and staff together to honor Latinx history, culture, and contributions. The event featured a dance lesson led by Cielo Dance Events, a marketplace showcasing local Latinx vendors, and a variety of delicious food for students to enjoy. The celebration fostered community, connection, and cultural pride, reflecting IVC's commitment to inclusivity and student engagement. View photos [here](#).

### Teacher Preparation Pathway Open House Welcomes Future Educators



The Teacher Preparation Pathway hosted its Open House in the new Center for Teacher Preparation on September 16. The event invited students, faculty, and community members to learn more about IVC's Teacher Preparation Pathway, a program designed to guide future educators on their journey to the classroom. Guests toured the new center, enjoyed refreshments, and connected with faculty and staff. Vice President for Instruction Rick Miranda delivered opening remarks, highlighting IVC's commitment to training the next generation of teachers and emphasizing the vital role educators play in shaping communities.

### Future-Ready IVC Community of Practice Launches



IVC launched the Future-Ready IVC Community of Practice, a yearlong professional learning experience led by Dr. Kimberly Lowry. The initiative aims to foster a shared understanding, institutional alignment, and actionable strategies around the principles of Community College 3.0, a model that focuses on preparing students for success beyond completion through strong transfer outcomes, career readiness, and social mobility. The inaugural session invited

faculty, classified professionals, and administrators to re-examine traditional metrics of success and reframe them to include wages, transfer achievement, and the development of social capital. Participants began the collaborative work of co-creating an inclusive definition of student success, identifying barriers and opportunities in current measures, and connecting these definitions to equity and mobility.

### IVC Showcases Programs at City of Irvine's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration



On September 14, IVC participated in the City of Irvine's Hispanic Heritage Month festival, Fiesta Latina en Irvine. The annual community event honored the culture, traditions, and contributions of Latin American and Spanish-speaking communities through music, dance, food, literature, and art. IVC's presence featured representatives from Outreach, Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS), Adult English as a Second Language (AESL), the

Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Program, and the Puente Program, who hosted interactive tables and shared resources with attendees. The celebration offered an opportunity for IVC to showcase its academic programs and support services, while fostering stronger connections with the broader community.

### 9/11 Day of Remembrance at IVC



IVC honored the lives lost in the 2001 terrorist attacks with a Day of Remembrance ceremony on September 11 hosted by IVC Campus Police in partnership with local first responder agencies. President John Hernandez welcomed the campus community, followed by brief remarks from Chief of Police Phil Romero. The program included a

moment of silence, a flag-folding ceremony led by Officers Jason Mann and Timothy Gutierrez, and a bagpipe performance of "Amazing Grace" by retired Deputy Sheriff Don Dixon from the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs. At the center of the gathering stood a memorial table with symbolic vases representing the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and Flight 93, serving as a powerful reminder of the day's lasting impact. This annual ceremony honors the sacrifices of first responders and the spirit of unity and reflection within the college community. View photos [here](#).

### **Puente's Noche de Familia Strengthens Bonds Between Students and Families**



On September 11, the Puente Program hosted its annual Noche de Familia, bringing together students and their families for an evening centered on community, culture, and connection. The gathering honored the families of Cohort 5, highlighting the vital role they play in supporting their students' educational journeys and celebrating the cultural traditions that unite the Puente community. President John Hernandez, the Puente team, and Puente Student Ambassadors welcomed attendees, offering encouragement for the academic year ahead and emphasizing the strength that comes from family support. This meaningful tradition continues to affirm IVC's commitment to fostering student success through community engagement and cultural celebration. View photos [here](#).

### **Irvine Vice Mayor and Chief of Staff Tour IVC**



IVC was honored to welcome Irvine Vice Mayor James Mai, Chief of Staff Steven Alves, and South Orange County Community College District Board President Carolyn Inmon for a campus tour on September 11. Guests had the opportunity to learn more about IVC's academic programs, student support services, and community partnerships that collectively strengthen the region's workforce and expand educational opportunity.

### **IVC Achieves Record-Breaking Enrollment of 16,230 Students**



IVC has reached a historic milestone in its 40-year history, setting a new enrollment record with 16,230 students counted at the official fall census on September 8. This record surpasses last year's all-time high and represents the largest headcount since the college's founding in 1985. The figure reflects the number of unduplicated students currently enrolled in courses and highlights IVC's continued role as a leading destination for higher education.

### **Three Puentistas Selected for USC Annenberg Journalism Bootcamp**



On September 5, IVC Puentistas Savannah Holguin, Andrea Gonzalez, and Priscilla Preciado were accepted into the inaugural Our Unsilencing: Opinion and Commentary Bootcamp, a highly selective journalism program sponsored by the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism and directed by acclaimed journalist and visiting professor Jean Guerrero. The two-weekend residential program brings together 10–12 students from community colleges and CSUs across the region, providing professional mentorship, skill development, and a \$2,000 stipend for each participant. Their acceptance into this competitive program highlights the strength of IVC's Puente Program in cultivating leadership, scholarship, and opportunities that amplify student voices.



### Topping Out Ceremony for IVC's New Student Services Center



IVC celebrated a significant milestone with the topping out of its new Student Services Center on September 4. The campus community gathered to sign and share heartfelt messages on the final steel beam before it was lifted into place, honoring a longstanding construction tradition that symbolizes progress, good fortune, and a safe completion. The new Student Services Center and Student Union buildings represent the college's largest construction project to date and emphasize IVC's commitment to enhancing student support and community engagement. This milestone marks a step forward in building state-of-the-art spaces that will foster student success and community connection for years to come. View photos [here](#).

### IVC Club Day Draws Hundreds of Students to Campus Life



Hosted by the Office of Student Life and the Inter-Club Council on September 3, IVC's Fall Club Day welcomed more than 600 students to connect with 65 student organizations. The event transformed the campus into a hub of activity, where students connected with peers, discovered leadership opportunities, and learned how involvement in clubs can enrich their academic and personal growth. Attendees engaged with club representatives, took part in interactive activities, and enjoyed a complimentary meal. Club Day showcases the various ways students can get involved, fostering connections, leadership, and community on campus. Photos from the day are available [here](#).

### President Hernandez Engages with Learning Communities



At the start of the fall semester, President John Hernandez visited two of IVC's learning communities, Puente and Equitable Learning Experience Valuing Achievement, Transfer, and Empowering Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ([ELEVATE AAPI](#)). While meeting with the incoming Puente cohort on August 21, Dr. Hernandez shared his experiences as an immigrant and first-generation college student, encouraging students to value community and perseverance as keys to success. He joined ELEVATE AAPI students on August 28 for a Lunch and Learn, where he reflected on his academic and professional journey in an informal setting that fostered dialogue and connection. In both gatherings, students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage directly with the president and were inspired by his story of resilience and achievement. Together, Puente and ELEVATE AAPI exemplify IVC's commitment to cultivating supportive, student-centered communities that empower learners to thrive academically and personally. View photos [here](#).

### IVC Partners with Arizona State University Online to Expand Bachelor's Degree Opportunities



On August 19, IVC announced a new partnership with Arizona State University (ASU) Online, offering students and alumni a 22% tuition savings on more than 180 bachelor's degree programs through the California Community College Achievement Plan. Over the past five years, 541 IVC students have transferred to ASU, making it the college's #1 out-of-state transfer destination. This collaboration provides a seamless and affordable transfer pathway with no income requirements, reducing financial barriers and expanding access to higher education. Read the full story [here](#).

### IVC Veterans Services Center Director Appointed to Statewide Advisory Committee



Director of Veterans Services Center Dylan Bender has been appointed by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to serve on the Veterans Advisory Committee for a two-year term beginning Fall 2025. The committee provides critical guidance on federal and state policy affecting student veterans, identifies the needs of veterans and college veterans' services programs, and supports the development of statewide priorities and initiatives. Bender's extensive experience working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, combined with his background in mental health, was a key factor in his selection. His service will strengthen statewide communication and collaboration on

veterans' issues, ensuring that California Community Colleges continue to provide meaningful support for veteran students.

### ELEVATE AAPI New Student Orientation



On August 15, IVC's Equitable Learning Experience Valuing Achievement, Transfer, and Empowering Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ([ELEVATE AAPI](#)) program welcomed over 60 students to its New Student Orientation in the Center for Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islanders (CAANAPI). The orientation introduced students to program services and

expectations, provided textbooks, and featured a student-led panel that encouraged peer-to-peer engagement. Interactive activities and a campus tour highlighted available academic support centers and resources, while a shared lunch fostered community-building. Students also contributed feedback on future programming, expressing strong interest in cultural identity development, career exploration, and service-learning opportunities.

### IVC Student Named Chime Workforce Scholar



On August 14, IVC student Ma. Nikka Reyes was selected as a 2025 Chime Workforce Scholar, earning a \$1,000 scholarship administered by the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Foundation. Reyes was chosen for her outstanding academic achievement, engagement, leadership potential, and career readiness. The Chime Workforce Scholarship program

awarded \$200,000 to 200 community college students nationwide who are pursuing workforce-ready programs. In addition to traditional educational expenses, the funds help students cover costs specific to entering the workforce, such as certification fees, uniforms, and tools.

### Congressmember Dave Min Visits The Spot: Center for Basic Needs



IVC welcomed Congressmember Dave Min (CA-47), District Director Russellie Bongolan, and staff member Matt Kern for a tour of The Spot: Center for Basic Needs on August 14. Led by Director of College, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Erin Pollard, the visit highlighted the essential services offered at The Spot, including food, housing, transportation assistance, free clothing and diapers, CalFresh enrollment, and confidential case management. College and District leadership, including President John Hernandez, SOCCCD Board President Carolyn

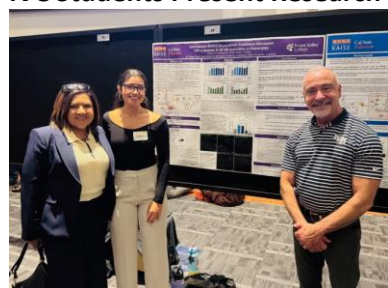
Inmon, and senior administrators, joined the tour to emphasize the vital role of basic needs support in student achievement. IVC student Brian Nguyen also shared his personal perspective, underscoring the transformative impact of access to these services. [Learn more about The Spot.](#)

### IVC Ranked Among Top 15 Community Colleges in the Nation



WalletHub recognized IVC as one of the nation's best community colleges in its 2025 rankings, placing the college at #12. Released on August 12, the annual ranking evaluates more than 650 community colleges nationwide on factors such as tuition and fees, student-faculty ratio, graduation rates, student loan default rates, and return on educational investment. IVC earned this distinction for its academic rigor, transfer success, and exceptional student support services, reaffirming the college's reputation for providing high-quality, affordable education that prepares students for future success.

### IVC Students Present Research at CSUF Summer Symposium



Seven IVC students presented at the 12th Annual California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) Summer Research Symposium on August 7 as part of the Undergraduate Research Experience hosted by Project RAISE. Each student received a \$5,000 stipend and completed an eight-week, faculty-mentored research project in STEM fields. The students are members of IVC's [Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement \(MESA\) Program](#), which supports educationally disadvantaged students in pursuing and excelling in STEM fields.

IVC student projects included:

- Evan Garcia | Dynamics of thermo-cavitation bubbles in narrow liquid gaps
- Clarice Encarnacion | Cannabidiol before doxorubicin treatment decreases TNF- $\alpha$  and NF-kB activation in astrocytes
- Joy Padilla | Detecting combinational hardware Trojans via machine learning on gate-level structural features
- Haley Barrios-Gomez | Comparative evaluation of lithium-ion and hybrid hydrogen fuel cell power systems in UAVs
- Chris Rodas | Offshore opportunity: Evaluating pairs trading in the deep-sea mining sector
- Gustavo Valencia | Data fights disease: Predicting dengue fever with AI
- Susan Zelidon | Programming sensor nodes for early wildfire detection technology

Their projects showcase the impact of IVC's MESA Program in preparing students for advanced research and transfer success. Read the full story [here](#).

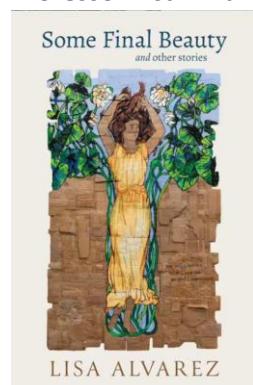
### IVC Honors Students Participate in UC Irvine's START Summer Internship Program



Three IVC Honors Program students participated in an 8-week NSF-funded research internship with the UC Irvine Center for Advanced Design and Manufacturing of Integrated Microfluidics (CADMIM), part of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering. During this paid internship, Amir Aminkashani, Kristine Chai, and Shayli Shayesteh contributed to cutting-edge research in a UCI biomedical engineering laboratory and participated in professional development tours to local biotech companies to gain insight into how biomedical products are created and launched. The interns presented their work at the Summer Showcase poster session, where Chai's research group won the award for the best project of the summer.



### Professor Lisa Alvarez Publishes Debut Short Story Collection



Professor of English Lisa Alvarez has released her debut short story collection, "Some Final Beauty and Other Stories," published by the University of Nevada Press on August 5. The collection showcases Chicanx characters whose lives embody empowerment, resilience, and cultural identity throughout California and Nevada. The book has already garnered critical attention, being featured as the lead title in "Alta Journal's" [August 2025 book roundup](#) and spotlighted in the [Los Angeles Times](#) and [Orange County Register](#). Notably, both the journalist and photographer who covered Alvarez's work for the LA Times are IVC alumni, underscoring the continued influence of IVC in shaping professional careers. Alvarez's debut affirms both her literary contributions and IVC's enduring impact in cultivating voices that shape culture, community, and the arts.

### Aaron Serrato Advances to NCAA Division II with Sul Ross State Commitment



After two strong seasons behind the plate for the Lasers, catcher Aaron Serrato has committed to continue his education and baseball career at Sul Ross State University in Texas. A graduate of Capistrano Valley High School in Mission Viejo, Serrato is the fourth member of IVC's 2025 baseball team to advance to a four-year program, joining teammates Tyler Eastham, Jackson Snitko, and Chase Quezada. Serrato played in

37 games this past spring, batting .267 with two home runs, 11 doubles, 19 runs scored, and 23 RBI. He recorded multi-hit performances in 10 games, including a standout 3-for-5 effort with two runs scored and three RBI in a 14-8 victory at Ventura on January 31. As a freshman in 2024, Serrato appeared in 30 games and posted a .256 average with three home runs, four doubles, three triples, and 19 RBI. Sul Ross State University, currently completing its transition to NCAA Division II, competes in the Lone Star Conference.

### Admissions and Records Achieves Milestones in Summer 2025



From May 26 to July 30, the Admissions and Records Office demonstrated exceptional dedication and efficiency in serving IVC students during the Summer 2025 term. During this period, the team provided front desk assistance to over 2,500 students and visitors, responded to more than 6,600 phone calls, managed over 10,000 student emails, and processed over 2,100 petitions. Additionally, staff reviewed over 5,000 graduation applications, providing timely support for students as they completed their academic journeys. Their collective efforts reflect the department's ongoing commitment to excellence in student services.

**Upcoming Events**

**Pathways to Success Fair**

October 1

**Midnight Blue Concert**

October 18

**Banned Books Week**

October 6

**Alumni Concert**

October 21

**Giving Day**

October 16

**Job Fair**

October 21

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Hernandez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John C. Hernandez, Ph.D.  
President