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District staff met with Assembly Members while visiting the state capitol in Sacramento. Left to right: Assembly Members Cristina Garcia, Cheryl R. Brown, Susan A. Bonilla, Chancellor **Helen Benjamin**, Tony Thurmond, Board Vice-President Greg Enholm, Director of Communications & Community Relations **Tim Leong**, Jim Frazier, Catharine Baker and Sebastian Ridley-Thomas.

## Advocacy Visits in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

Chancellor **Helen Benjamin**, along with members of the Governing Board, traveled to Sacramento and Washington, D.C. during the month of February as part of their annual advocacy visits. Their first stop was to the state capitol where meetings with six of the District's seven state legislators were held to discuss community college issues.

In Washington, D.C., meetings were held with the District's four congressional representatives on topics such as Pell Grants and reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Joining the chancellor on the meetings were Governing Board members Tim Farley and John T. Nejedly. Chancellor Benjamin also sat on a national panel promoting both the America and California's College Promise campaigns, providing free community college to responsible students. The panel included a surprise visit by United States Second Lady and Northern Virginia Community College Instructor Dr. Jill Biden.



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Office at [info@4cd.edu](mailto:info@4cd.edu).



## Los Medanos College Honored by Aspen Institute

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program has named Los Medanos College (LMC) as one of the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2017 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and \$1 million in prize funds, as well as Siemens Technical Scholars Program student scholarships. The Aspen Prize is awarded every two years and serves as the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. The top prize winner and up to four finalists with distinction are recognized for exceptional student outcomes in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and access and success for minority and low-income students.



"It is an incredible honor to be nationally recognized by the Aspen Institute," said Los Medanos College President **Bob Kratochvil**. "Los Medanos College is committed to providing access, equitable outcomes, and success for all of our students, and that is reflected in the dedication and passion of our faculty, staff, and managers."

The top 150 community colleges named, including LMC, represent the diversity and richness of the community college sector and are located across 35 states in urban, rural and suburban areas.

A full list of the selected colleges and details on the selection process can be found at [www.aspenprize.org](http://www.aspenprize.org).

## DVC Umoja Students Host Brown Bag Session



*DVC students and Congressman Mark DeSaulnier discussed race relations and education in America as part of DVC's Black History Month series. Students from left to right: Nick Birago, Tierra Lynch, Alaina Limbrick, Claunesha (Nesha) Williams, and Da'mon Daniels.*

Diablo Valley College's (DVC) Umoja students hosted a brown bag session where they discussed race in America from their own unique perspectives. The student panel was one of many Black History Month events occurring at DVC during the month of February. Led by five Umoja students, a roomful of diverse DVC students listened in as the students responded to questions about the African American student experience, pop culture, current race relations and the future of America as they see it. Also in attendance was Congressman Mark DeSaulnier, who took time out of his schedule to speak to students and provide his support.

The Umoja program, introduced at DVC in 2013, is a statewide community of educators and learners committed to the academic success, personal growth and self-actualization of African Americans and other students. Umoja, a Kiswahili word meaning unity, aims to educate the whole student – body, mind and spirit through meaningful courses and instruction led by faculty trained in Umoja principles.

"A huge part of the Umoja Program is helping students develop self-efficacy, and that means encouraging them to discover who they are, what they value, how they feel, and what they think about the world around them," said Heidi Goen-Salter, a DVC English professor who acts as an advisor for the program. "Yesterday was about five young African American leaders owning their identities and walking tall, while demonstrating for the audience just what that means. Everyone benefits from that."



## Community College Success Stories

After President Obama proposed America's College Promise, offering two years of free community college for responsible students, the District took the initiative to help support the national proposal. Chancellor **Helen Benjamin**, who chairs California's College Promise CEO Leadership Committee, put out a call for employees to share their community college story to highlight the tremendous value the community college experience has provided them.

*The News* will feature a few of the stories submitted every month. All the stories are located on the District website. To read them visit <http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/stories/list.aspx>,



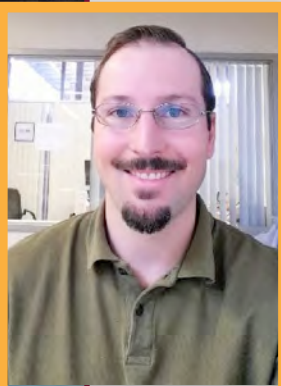
**Carla Matute**, Assessment Center Technician at Contra Costa College Alumna, Contra Costa College, San Pablo, CA

I can speak from a foreign student's point of view. Arriving from a foreign country, encountering a new culture, new society, new systems, new tongue, I needed the nurturing and the quality education that a community college offers. As an immigrant, my only goal was to learn English through the ESL department, but finding the resources, the support, and the quality instruction made me pursue higher goals. After I learned the language, I realized I was capable of achieving more and the resources helped me to complete an associate's degree and complete my transfer requirements. I am currently working on my bachelor's degree and hope that this new level of education helps me gain the knowledge I need to continue to provide quality support and nurturing to our students so they can also succeed.



**Marisa Greenberg**, Administrative Secretary at Diablo Valley College Alumna, Contra Costa College, San Pablo, CA

As a student-athlete in high school, my grades were always "just good enough" to be eligible, and like many student-athletes, I thought that sports would carry me through life. After a major car accident my senior year of high school, I realized that I needed to change my thinking. I enrolled at Contra Costa College (CCC) after being recruited by the soccer coach. After my first few weeks, I finally got it. My classes and instructors felt right, and I had the support I needed to be successful. While at CCC, I was mentored by a professor who set me on a path towards coaching and teaching at the community college level. I went from being a mediocre student to graduating with honors. I transferred to a 4-year university and obtained both my B.S. and M.A. degrees. I would never have made it that far had it not been for the solid educational foundation from CCC. In addition to being a three-sport athlete, I progressed from being a student worker, to hourly classified, to assistant coach, and finally became a permanent classified employee in 2009. The Contra Costa Community College District became home for me in 1999, and I am honored to continue to be a part of the District.



**Justin Nogarr**, Offset Technician at Los Medanos College Alumnus, Los Medanos College, Pittsburg, CA

I knew I wanted to major in art when I first came to Los Medanos College. After taking courses with **Ken Alexander**, **Rebecca Talley**, and **Curtis Corlew**, I was inspired to pursue the study of graphic design at a 4-year college. I earned my bachelor's degree from California State University, Sacramento, majoring in graphic design. After working as a freelance designer and photo production artist for a few years, I decided to go back to school again. I went on to earn a Master of Arts in Industrial Arts from San Francisco State University and an M.B.A. from Brandman University while running the print shop and copy center as a classified staff member at Los Medanos College.

We'd love to hear your story, too! If you're a current employee of the Contra Costa Community College District, please submit your community college experience here:

<https://insite.4cd.edu/orgs/dwco/dst/ccss/pages/new.aspx>

## Budget Forums Scheduled

The 2016 Budget Forums schedule has been scheduled for the month of April. Don't forget to attend one of the upcoming sessions led by Chancellor **Helen Benjamin**, Executive Vice Chancellor, Administrative Services' **Gene Huff**, and Associate Vice Chancellor/Chief Financial Officer **Jonah Nicholas**. These informative sessions offer employees the opportunity to learn more about the District's financial picture for the current academic year, and what may be in store for 2016-17. The sessions are open to all employees, so pick the date and time that works best for you!

### 2016 Budget Forums

Location	Date	Time	Room
DVC	4/5/16	3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Diablo Room
SRC	4/6/16	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	W-204
LMC	4/7/16	3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	L-109
CCC	4/13/16	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	HS-101
DO	4/19/16	9:00 am – 11:00 am	Board Room
BWC	4/25/16	3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Room 14

### Board Report

To review highlights of the Governing Board Meeting held on February 24, 2016, click on the link below:

[http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/board\\_reports/February%2024,%202016.pdf](http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/board_reports/February%2024,%202016.pdf)

### Cabinet Highlights

To review highlights of the Cabinet meetings held in February 2016, click on the link below:

[http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/chancellors\\_cabinet/February%202016.pdf](http://www.4cd.edu/crpa/chancellors_cabinet/February%202016.pdf)

## District Welcomes New Employees

Please welcome the following new employees who were approved by the Governing Board in February.

### Regular Academic Employees

Location	Name	Title
LMC	Debra Hawkes	Licensed Vocational Nursing
LMC	Melissa Pon	Counseling
LMC	Rudolf Rose	Counseling
LMC	Nicole Westbrook	Counseling
LMC	Sharlice Wright	Counseling

### Regular Monthly Classified Employees

Location	Name	Title
CCC	Lisa Franklin	Career Development Services Coordinator
CCC	Travis Hiner	Theater Staging Specialist
CCC	Magda Mercado	Senior Administrative Secretary
CCC	Yolanda Rodriguez	Instructional Assistant
DVC	Zachary Siliga	Office Assistant II
LMC	Lindsay Bertolucci	Instructional Assistant
LMC	Fernando Lozano	Music Laboratory Coordinator

*The Contra Costa Community College District, founded in 1948 and governed by a publicly elected five-member board, is one of the largest multi-college community college districts in California. The mission of the District is to attract and transform students and communities by providing accessible, innovative and outstanding higher education learning opportunities and support services.*

*Contra Costa Community College District is committed to equal opportunity in educational programs, employment, and campus life. The District does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, parental status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in any access to and treatment in College programs, activities, and application for employment*