



CUESTA COLLEGE NEWS

+ Foundation Annual Report

FALL 2019



A Letter From Our Superintendent/President
JILL STEARNS

Dear Cuesta community,

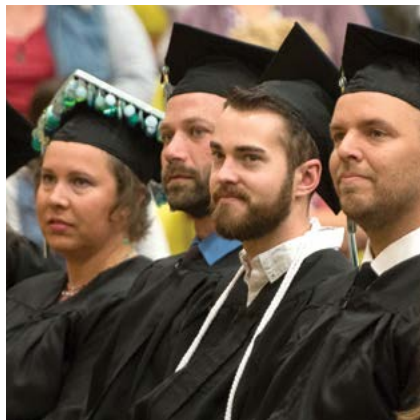
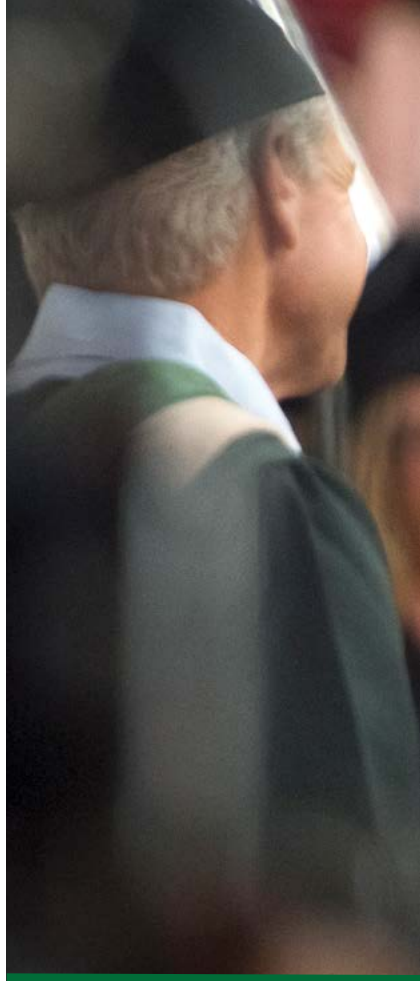
The Board of Trustees named the new instructional building on the San Luis Obispo campus in honor of Dr. Frank R. Martinez, the founding vice president of academics of Cuesta College. The beautifully designed space for teaching and learning is a most suitable way to acknowledge the leadership of Dr. Martinez as a vice president and second president. It is a privilege to hear Dr. Martinez speak about starting the college from a cardboard box. I appreciate the incredible programs that have sprung from his early vision of academic excellence at Cuesta College.

I recently joined the North County Campus Children’s Center preschoolers as they added handprints and “signatures” to a metal beam that will be integrated into the R & B Schultz Early Childhood Education Center. The new center is under construction on the north east corner of the campus near the Dale & Mary Schwartz Learning Resource Center. The data center is nearing completion in San Luis Obispo bringing improved data security, power stability, and making Cuesta College cloud ready. Additional projects underway include upgrading the campus fiber infrastructure and widespread roof repairs and replacements. These critical upgrades and repairs are made possible by your support of Measure L. Thank you for investing in Cuesta College.

Warm regards,



Jill Stearns, Ph.D.
 Superintendent/President



CUESTA COLLEGE NEWS + FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT

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Cuesta Celebrates **CLASS OF 2019**

Cuesta College awarded 1,423 degrees to 1,060 graduating students at the 54th annual commencement ceremony on May 24th. Of this year's graduating class, 499 students came from local high schools, 217 of which received their first year of college fee-free via the Cuesta College Promise Scholarship—the largest number of Promise Scholarship recipients to date.

The graduating class of 2019 is made up of students with the age range of 17 to 77. Awarded this year were a total of 534

associate of arts degrees, 316 associate of sciences degrees, and 573 transfer degrees. Of the graduates, 239 earned honors or high honors by achieving a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, including 14 who earned a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Twenty-three veterans earned degrees this year, representing the branches of Air Force, Army, Marine,

Navy, and Coast Guard. Class of 2019 included students from two international countries (Australia and Brazil) and four states (Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, and Washington).



Cuesta College's Registered Nursing (RN) program also celebrated its 51st graduating class with a Pinning Ceremony. The 43 graduates received their Associates Degree in Nursing (ADN). This year's cohort included students that ranged in age from 23 to 62 and was made up of 30 females and 13 males. Thirty-eight of the graduates were from within the San Luis Obispo County, four from northern Santa Barbara County, and one from out of the area.

Seventeen of the graduating nursing students are currently in the third class of the California State University Monterey Bay—Cuesta College ADN to BSN program on target to receive their Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) in May 2020. The second class of Cuesta College's ADN to BSN collaborative program with CSU Monterey Bay graduated on May 18th.

"Graduates, you have a great team behind you," said Superintendent/President Dr. Jill Stearns. "The faculty, staff, and leadership team of Cuesta College are proud to be part of your educational story. We are excited that you are poised for the next step of your life's journey, and we look forward to hearing of your success." ■



Program Spotlight:
HOSPITALITY
Gets a Warm Welcome

The hospitality and service industries are booming on the Central Coast. To meet the increased demand for more workers, Cuesta College extended the welcome mat and relaunched the hospitality program in August 2019.

The program offers a Hospitality Management Associate in Science for Transfer degree to prepare students to transfer into the CSU system. Students already employed in the industry also have the option of choosing non-credit courses to gain skills and experience.

“The service industry is a driving force of business here on the Central Coast,” said Hospitality instructor Sean Nolan. “One of the nice things about the program here is that students learn the scope of the hospitality industry in this area between hotels, wineries, breweries, restaurants, and wedding events.”

According to Nolan, local businesses are excited about the possibility of meeting the demand for workers in the region. However, the goal of the program isn’t simply to add more potential employees, but to also develop a more educated workforce in all sectors.

“There are service skills and a service-minded philosophy that you learn in a hospitality class that will assist you in any business that you decide to get into,” said Nolan. “Learning how to work with people, to comport yourself, to create positive situations are all beneficial to everybody in any industry.”

Student Shawn Burg heard about the new program and moved to the area from Los Angeles to pursue a degree in hospitality. He hopes to run his own hotel eventually, but for now, he’s taking advantage of learning about hotel management from experts in the field. “My instructor (Kendi Root) has worked all over the world in hospitality, and that’s the perfect person you want teaching the class,” he said. “I think a lot of people don’t know how amazingly diverse the industry is, and there’s a lot to learn.”

Nolan has been working in hotels for 28 years, bringing his passion and vast knowledge of the industry to the hospitality program. He hopes to inspire students to pursue what he sees as a rewarding career.

“The service industry is exciting and fulfilling because you can be a part

of someone’s life-changing event in some way,” Nolan said. “It’s hard work—but to be able to go home and feel that you provided an experience that someone will potentially remember for a lifetime, it doesn’t get better than that.” ■



NEW DATA CENTER GOES LIVE

Funded by Measure L funds allocated for technology infrastructure projects, the new Data Center on the San Luis Obispo campus is scheduled to go live December 2019 and become Cuesta's resilient communications hub.

location consolidates the college's previous three server "closets" into one new space, reducing strain on IT staff and improving the speed and stability of communication between servers, network devices, and the cloud.

ensuring that all departments benefit from improved connectivity.

And what Keith Stearns, Executive Director of Information Technology, is looking forward to the most is the extensive power upgrade that comes with the new data center.

"Previously, even a short power outage would cause systems to go down and could take up to three hours to recover," he said. "A proper data center should have redundant power. Our new generators will allow our systems to remain online during an outage or natural disaster."

Stearns also points out that the new data center is more future-proof than the previous configuration, allowing for easy expansion of square footage, air conditioning, and power capacity. This ensures that the infrastructure upgrade made possible by Measure L funds will serve the Cuesta College community for many years to come. ■

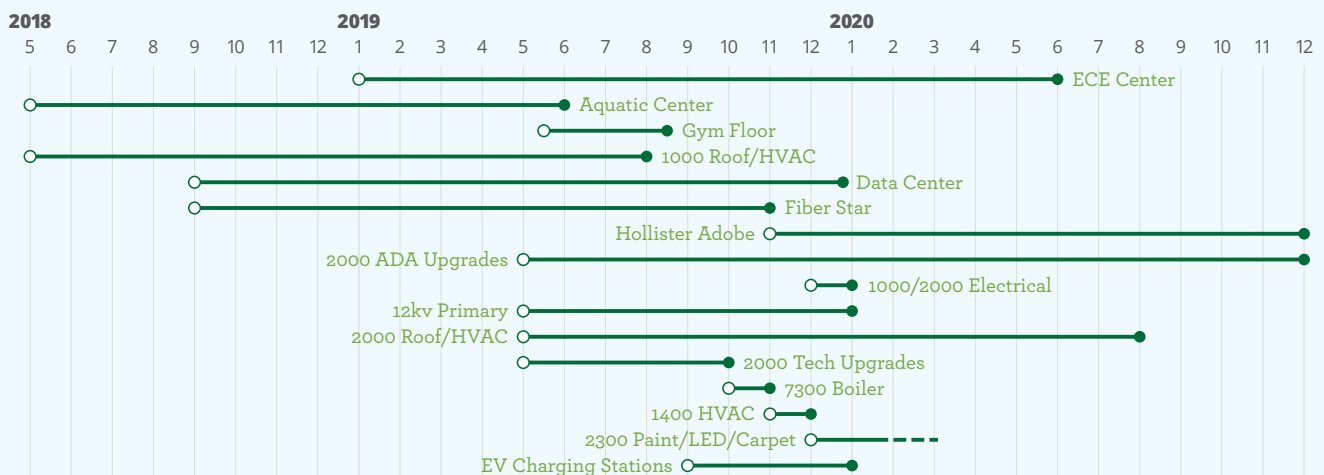


The need for a data center arose from the ad-hoc nature of Cuesta's technology infrastructure. Equipment, staff, and resources were spread out across the campus in an inefficient way. A centralized

location consolidates the college's previous three server "closets" into one new space, reducing strain on IT staff and improving the speed and stability of communication between servers, network devices, and the cloud. Offices in the data center house IT support staff, putting them right next to the systems that they maintain every day. New fiber optic lines are being run from the center to all campus buildings,

BOND PROJECTS TIMELINE

Critical upgrades and repairs made possible by your support of Measure L.



Cuesta College 2019

Cuesta College was ranked as the 2019 **#1** Best Community College in California by niche.com.



As part of an ongoing effort to support student success, the Cougar Career Closet was launched to provide gently-used professional clothing for students to use in interviews and job fairs.

Cuesta College held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Measure L-funded R & B Shultz Early Childhood Education Center at the North County Campus.

5 outstanding Central Coast women were recognized for their professional and civic contributions at the 2019 Women of Distinction Awards.

1 JANUARY



2 FEBRUARY



3 MARCH



7 JULY

The Cuesta College Chapter of the Latino Leadership Network (LLN) announced the renaming of its scholarship in memory of a local education advocate, Andrea Blanco. The beloved Laguna Middle School teacher's advocacy will live on in the newly named "LLN Andrea Blanco Scholarship," which supports **AB-540** students attending Cuesta College.

AUGUST

The Cuesta College Children's Center and Lab School began accepting up to 16 children, ages **2.5 to 5 years old**, for its brand-new evening preschool program held Monday through Thursday evenings from 3:30-9:00 PM.

9 SEPTEMBER

Named one of the 2019 "Best Writing Conferences in America" by The Writer magazine, the **35th** Annual Central Coast Writers Conference (CCWC) was held at Cuesta College's San Luis Obispo campus on September 26-28.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Cuesta Drama's Ghost Ship was honored by the Kennedy Center with **10** national awards including Outstanding Theatrical Creation, Outstanding Production of a New Work, and Outstanding Director.

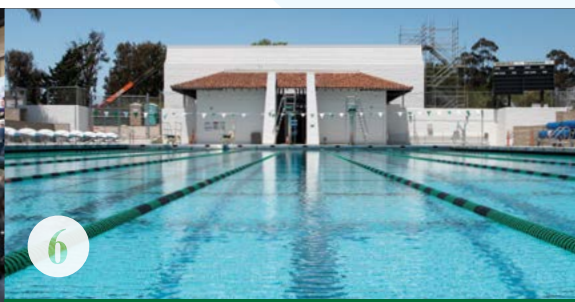
4 APRIL



The Monarch Centers at Cuesta College opened its doors to provide resources for undocumented students and offer a welcoming and safe environment.



MAY



6 JUNE

The brand-new Aquatics Center is officially open! Funded by Measure L, the project included upgrades to a **50-meter** competition-sized swimming pool along with an expanded 25-yard practice pool.



10 OCTOBER

Cuesta College welcomed **800** local high school seniors to experience college life, explore career options, and learn about the Cuesta Promise Scholarship at the 6th Annual Promise Day on October 18.

11 NOVEMBER

The Harold J. Miossi Cultural & Performing Art Center celebrated a decade with Homegrown, a **10th Anniversary** Benefit Concert. Performing Arts Alumni returned from their successes in the field to celebrate the program that helped harvest their talents!

DECEMBER

The new Data Center on the SLO campus is scheduled to go live, providing Cuesta College with improved data security and power stability. In preparation, a full technology shutdown from **December 18–22** is required so the IT team may move the network core and servers into the facility. The outage will leave the campuses without internet connectivity, wi-fi, and online services.



Student Spotlight:

RILEY TAFT

STEM ENGAGE Scholarship Recipient

Riley Taft's first engineering project was Shiva, a Volkswagen Vanagon he refurbished in his senior year of high school. He enrolled in drafting, woods, and metals classes to rebuild the interior, which includes a bed, stove, sink, water storage, and even a solar shower on the roof. Outside of school, he worked on the engine with his dad.

Taft took advantage of dual enrollment college courses, finished a semester early, and spent the extra time working on the van. After giving his valedictorian speech, he hit the road with Shiva on a summer road trip from Colorado. He headed towards San Luis Obispo to attend Cuesta College and use the skills he picked up to study engineering.

"I chose Cuesta specifically because of its great engineering courses and pathway to Cal Poly," he said. "It's also one of the best community colleges in California."

Taft is one of 25 students at Cuesta College receiving a scholarship of up to \$7,700 a year for up to two years and an additional \$10,000 each year for 2-3 years upon transferring to Cal Poly. The scholarships are made possible through a STEM ENGAGE grant funded by the National Science Foundation.

ENGAGE (Engineering Neighbors: Gaining Access, Growing Engineers), is a partnership between Cal Poly, Cuesta College, and Allan Hancock College launched in Fall 2019 to increase access to engineering careers for low-income, academically talented students with a demonstrated financial need. "It's an immense opportunity, and it will help me pursue my goals because it relieves some financial burden," Taft said.

Now entering his second year, Taft is making the most of his STEM classes and being active on campus. He is the

vice president of the Cuesta College Engineers Without Borders, the first community college chapter in the nation. The student-led organization aims to support communities worldwide through engineering projects that meet basic human needs.

"I realize how powerful engineering can be," he said. "I want to acquire all these tools with engineering to build up a toolbox, so I can then share that knowledge with others. I want to use what I'm learning to help and empower other people."

For Taft, this desire to make an impact on the world inspires him to build not only his future but also a future for others. ■

AGRICULTURE IN ACTION

AG STUDENTS CONDUCT SUMMER RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

Five Cuesta College students were among the first community college students invited to participate in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) at Cal Poly through the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environmental Sciences.



Sinead Carney, Amber Eckert, Jordan Haddad, Christian Przybyla, and Luis-Isaiah Valdez were selected to work on research projects in their field of study under the supervision of a faculty mentor. For ten weeks over the summer, the students conducted at least 20 hours per week of field or laboratory research, culminating in a poster presentation of their results at a symposium in August.



"They learned about research methods and processes, and they were able to apply what they have learned in our ag programs to current research in areas such as business, plant science, and environmental science," said Amy Stapp, Ag Business Instructor and Program Lead.

Haddad's research focused on the hydroponic strawberry response to oxygen saturated water, for which she calculated averages and measured fruits. While her findings were inconclusive, the practical applications and lessons she learned proved to be the most valuable. "I appreciated doing it and getting the experience because just reading the textbook can't prepare you as much as actually doing it," she said. "You can read about putting a seed in the ground and watching it grow, but what happens if it gets pests? The program provided real-life applications to see how the world affects things."

For Stapp, the exposure to research enabled the students to have a positive learning experience that she hopes will have a lasting impact. "I am incredibly proud of the work each of them did this summer," she said. "I think it allowed them to get a taste of what research looks like in the field, and hopefully will help them be more clear on the educational path they choose." ■



CUESTA STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD



NURSING IN GUADALAJARA

Last April, a group of 17 nursing students and faculty traveled to Guadalajara as part of a Global Nursing course to earn their advanced Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees through a partnership between Cuesta College and CSU Monterey Bay. The students graduated from Cuesta College's RN Program in May 2018.

Helping to broaden their language skills and cultural awareness, the students took an assessment course entirely in Spanish and were enrolled in local cultural classes through the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara as part of their curriculum.

"This was a rare and great opportunity to be able to travel to another country and have the trip be coordinated to be safe, fun, and a great learning experience," said student Alvin Do. "We stayed with a host family, learned what family culture in

Mexico was like, and got to experience first-hand the rich culture of Guadalajara."

The week-long trip offered cultural and educational immersion while also helping others in need. The students had the opportunity to visit rural areas with other medical students and perform health screenings on residents with little access to healthcare.

The students graduated with their bachelor's degrees in May of 2019, completing their educational journey with a wider understanding of the world around them.

"The experience went beyond what any of the students and faculty imagined it would turn out to be," said Marcia Scott, Director of Nursing at Cuesta College. "We came back enriched and stronger in personal and professional growth." ■



SINGING ACROSS FRANCE

Last June, the Cuesta Chamber Singers and Voce traveled all the way to the south of France, performing concerts in towns and villages that graciously welcomed them with open arms. “We covered the entire country from east to west and performed 11 concerts in 16 days,” said John Knutson, the Division Chair of the Performing Arts Department at Cuesta College.

For student Stocke Gleason, meeting the people of France was immensely memorable. “We would go to some places and the entire town would come out into the plaza just to listen to us,” Gleason said. “They were amazingly supportive people who had so much to offer us. It was a beautiful place, and an amazing opportunity that I would not have been able to get at other places. I truly believe that.”

According to Gleason, the group was astounded to discover how music bridged the gap between cultures. They met touring ensembles from other countries including Belgium, Canada, Indonesia, Latvia, Spain, South Africa, and Ukraine.

“I think that just the experience of getting out in the world is wonderful,” said Gleason. “College is often associated with that ability—to go out into the world and experience new things.” ■



FIELD RESEARCH IN BAJA

Each summer in Baja California, Mexico, Cuesta students get first-hand field research experience alongside their professors in a sixteen-day program which explores the richly biodiverse marine habitats near Bahía de los Ángeles, where the primary research facility is located.



Jessica Ormiston took the trip this past summer as a student-turned-teaching-assistant. Her involvement ended up meaning so much more to her than she initially expected. “I would encourage it wholeheartedly,” she said of the program. “You get to do things you wouldn’t normally be able to do as a typical civilian—say, if you went on vacation in Mexico.”

The opportunity for field experience was unparalleled, according to Ormiston. The team swam with many different marine animals, and even encountered swarms of comb jellies while out snorkeling. “They’re only the size of the first knuckle on your thumb, and in the light, you could see the iridescent colors on them,” she said. “It looked like little rainbows flashing through them, and it was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen.”

The study abroad program includes Marine Biology with lab (222 & 222L) taught by Dr. Laurie McConnico and Dr. Silvio Favoreto. The next session will be held Summer 2020 from June 7–30. Pre-registration is available now. For more information, please email laurie_mcconnico@cuesta.edu. ■



"I'm just so happy and thankful to be here every day and get to work with each of you. I love my job and what I get to do with students, and this is incredible. Thank you."

Heidi Webber
2019 President's Leadership Award
Co-Recipient

Staff & Faculty **AWARDS**

Fall 2019 Opening Day



"This is incredibly humbling. It's been a great 28 years working here [in] education and helping young people. Cuesta College has been awesome... the people here are amazing."

Rob Thoresen
2019 Academic Employee of the Year



"Through Guided Pathways we are reimagining the college experience, creating clearer paths to completion, providing easier access to supportive services, and facilitating students' ability to graduate in less time, with less debt, and well-prepared for their futures. I am honored to receive this award with Heidi and we are both looking forward to continuing this transformative work to the benefit of our students."

Lara Baxley
2019 President's Leadership Award
Co-Recipient



"I think all of us could say we're better people from the students who have crossed our paths. I certainly know that they've enriched my life a lot."

Denise Chellsen
2019 Teaching Excellence Award



"I feel so grateful to be a part of the Cuesta family. I appreciate each of the positions I have held here. I am glad that the service I am providing is helping staff, faculty, and students. I look forward to continuing to do so in the coming years. Thank you!"

Karen Garza
2019 Classified Employee of the Year



"I've been here at Cuesta for 15 years. I was a student here, and to be able to come back and serve our community and our students, and especially in this important time when we're talking about equity and race, I hope that I can continue for 15 more years."

Mia Ruiz
2019 Management Senate
Employee of the Year



Cougar Fans,

As we begin the new academic year and our student-athletes and coaches have settled in, we are incredibly fortunate to come back to two new Athletic Facility renovations. I can't express how grateful we are for the commitment to update the Aquatics Center pool and the Dr. Gilbert H. Stork Gymnasium floor. The two projects were a part of the Cuesta College Bond Measure L and were sorely needed.

The Aquatics Center is enjoyed by not only our men's & women's water polo teams but many Kinesiology and Community Program classes. As you can see from the pictures, the beautiful pool facility is utilized from sunrise to sunset. The new gym floor has been used by our women's volleyball and basketball teams, along with several other community leagues. Both projects came out beautifully, and I encourage you to come out to some of our games this year.



Go Cougars,

Bob Mariucci
Director of Athletics

Business Partner:

HINSON'S TIRE & AUTO

Supporting Cuesta College Athletics

Hinson's Tire Pros is a family owned and operated automotive repair center and tire dealer. Based in Morro Bay, the 5 Diamond Tire and Automotive Shop (the highest rating given by Tire Pros) has been committed to providing great service since 1954.

For owner and operator Minas Kurkeyerian, what's equally as important to serving customers is giving back to the local community in various ways including becoming a Business Partner with Cuesta College.

In addition to being a business partner, Hinson's Tire Pros is an ardent supporter of Cuesta Athletics. The company is the lead sponsor for the annual Hinson's

Tire Pros Basketball Classic, which recently celebrated its fourth year at Cuesta College. They not only provide funds for the tournament, but is also responsible for the program, food, and trophies.

Hinson's Tire Pros support of college athletics highlights the importance of providing opportunities for student-athletes. "Lots of great things come out of sports," Kurkeyerian said. "The students who participate in sports learn how to manage much better because they need to balance their classes and athletics. They get to learn how to work together as a part of a team, and learn about hard work and discipline. It's an important stepping stone." ■



BECOME A BUSINESS PARTNER WITH CUESTA COLLEGE

For more info, please call the Cuesta College Foundation at (805) 546-3279.



Alumni Spotlight:
DREW KIRSCH
Film Director

Drew Kirsch attended Cuesta College from 2008–2011 and has since been making headway in the film industry. He is fresh from collecting accolades for co-directing Taylor Swift’s music video for “You Need to Calm Down.” The video, which won the 2019 MTV VMA Award for Music Video of the Year, has garnered almost 160 million views since its release. Kirsch took the time to chat with us to discuss his time at Cuesta College, his advice for students and aspiring filmmakers, and what’s next in his career.

How did you find Cuesta College?

I’m from Reno, Nevada. During my senior year of high school, I was exploring junior colleges in Southern California—looking at San Diego and Los Angeles. A friend of mine was going to Cal Poly, and during spring break,

my three friends and I drove down and hung out with her for a whole weekend. I had never even heard of San Luis Obispo, and I loved it. Six months later, we all signed up for Cuesta and moved down. I would say, at the time, I was pretty lost. I wasn’t good at school, and it didn’t excite me. I was taking classes and getting by, but I had no idea what I was going to do.

Which class or professor made the most impact on you?

I took an English class with Kymba Bartley, which would be the English class that changed my entire life. She showed us documentaries and films, and she broke them down and explained to us the art of persuasion using ethos, pathos, and logos. She taught us rhetoric and critical thinking. And I was just fascinated. It was the

first time probably in my entire life that something in school has really captured me and made me interested to learn more.

She would question the class a lot, and teach us to question her and everything around us. She asked me, “What are you going to do in your life? Do you want the typical way of life that we’ve been told that it’s always supposed to be?” I’ll never forget it when she broke that down to me. I was pretty much having a quarter-life crisis at the time—it sounds ridiculous at the age of 19. But I was like, “I’m not good at anything. I’ve never been good at anything. What am I going to do in this life to have a purpose?”

She told me, “Don’t be afraid to explore everything. And just know it’s okay to be

Drew Kirsch (center) on set of Rufus Du Sol music video. Photo courtesy of Drew Kirsch.

a bartender—if you love bartending, and that’s what makes you happy, and you have a purpose doing it.” She opened my mind, and she made me explore.

What were some of your memorable experiences at Cuesta College?

I took a film class with John Arno, and he gave us a project. I went home, back to Reno, and I filmed this snowboard video. We all premiered our projects, and after I played mine, Arno asked me how long I had been doing film. And I was like, “I’ve never done it.” And he was like, “Come on.” I knew how to edit. I knew how to use a computer really well. It was easy for me to edit, and I’d learned the basics he had taught me. I thought it was easy, and he was like, “Whoa, this is really good.” I remember that day. I remember he made me feel pretty good about it. I was like, “Oh, wow. I’m pretty good at this.” And I was finally one of the best in the class at something. It sparked an interest in me to try to look into that more.

I was watching a lot of movies at the time, and looking at them differently since I was being taught how they were done. I was just really interested, and I was excited. I bought a camera, a cheap camera, and I just started shooting everything I possibly could. Anything. From ballet recitals to weird little mini-documentaries, to films for class, and anything I could get my hands on. And I loved it.

How did you launch your career in filmmaking?

I packed my bags, and I moved down to LA. I got an internship that turned into a job at USA Today Sports doing action sports content. And eventually, I met up with a friend of mine from San Luis Obispo who had also moved to LA. He was friends with a lot of rappers, and he convinced me to do a rap music video. I was like, “Who watches these videos?” I had no interest in it, but I did

it, and I loved it. So I did another and another. That’s just kind of how it all started. It was just me with a camera at the time.

Eventually, I started sneaking out to other music video sets and watching what they did. I learned I actually wanted to direct and not just hold the camera anymore. I started taking my budgets and putting them all towards hiring a crew, and eventually, I got signed by an agent. That led everything to where it is now. I love what I do every day. It’s a pretty cool job, and it’s crazy to think where I am now from 10 years ago.

Where are you hoping to take your career?

Feature films. I’m working on that right now, actually—a lot of bigger music videos, commercials, and features. Features have always been my goal. But I’ll always do commercials, and I’ll always do music videos. They’re where my heart is.

like, “Oh, I want to be holding the camera.” It’s an important role, but there’s also so much to learn about editing, producing, and any of the other departments.

My advice would be to do as much as possible and shoot everything—whether it’s a music video, a short film, or your next-door neighbor doing yard work. I would film my dog walking around the backyard to get good at focusing the camera. It’s all about putting in the hours. If you love it, put in the hours.

Why do you think community colleges are important?

Cuesta is such a right place to find out what you want to do and explore. There are so many types of classes at Cuesta and such good teachers who are so encouraging. There was something about Cuesta that encouraged me to move on versus being there just to get a degree. It’s a safe place to learn and



Drew Kirsch on set of with Taylor Swift. Photo courtesy of Drew Kirsch.

What’s your advice for students who want to pursue filmmaking?

If you’re an independent filmmaker in John’s class, work on everything and learn every department. He did a good job of making sure everyone was included, but right off the bat, everyone’s

help you go where you want to go. Cuesta encourages you to go out and be great. ■

A Message From Our Foundation Board President **DEBBIE PERRAULT**

Thank you for your support...

I am sincerely honored to serve as this year's Cuesta College Foundation President. I am excited to lead a Foundation Board, who are not only qualified and brilliant board members, but who also, I am proud to share, collectively have over 230 years of volunteer service to the Cuesta College Foundation! I would like to thank each one of my colleagues for their continuous and vital commitment to advance our Mission.

Beyond the Foundation Board, I am surrounded by a community of incredible philanthropic supporters that have successfully contributed to building the Cuesta College Foundation into a strong asset for Cuesta College and our region. I am thankful to you for your investment and appreciate that you believe in our work enough to give us meaningful support. We are here because you care; thank you for your trust in us!

It gives me great satisfaction to share that the Cuesta College Foundation, after forty-six years, ensures the highest level of educational opportunities for students' access and success. I hope you will continue to join me in investing in this vision. Thank you for keeping our Mission a Promise, and together, building the future of our students!



Debbie Perrault
President, Cuesta College
Foundation Board of Directors



Whether in the classroom, in quality time spent with students, or in the form of financial support for those who need it most, Lara and Greg Baxley's contributions to Cuesta College have been instrumental to student success.

The husband-and-wife team met during their college years. Both studied chemistry at Cal Poly, both attended the University of Oregon for their graduate degrees, and both now work as professors in the chemistry department at Cuesta College. They ultimately wanted to teach at a community college, and their dream was to end up on the Central Coast. Cuesta checked all their boxes.

"I love working at the same place as him," said Lara. "It's really nice working with your spouse," Greg agreed with a chuckle.



Donor Profile: The Baxleys
**CONTRIBUTING
TO STUDENT SUCCESS**



What Greg enjoys the most about Cuesta is working in tandem with people across varying roles in education. “We’re such a small community here,” he said. “The staff, the faculty, the management, we’re all working toward the same goal, and that is student success.”

For Lara, some of the most transformative work to benefit students has been in her role as faculty co-coordinator with the implementation of Guided Pathways—a statewide initiative to help students find clear paths to complete their educational goals. “Guided Pathways is reimagining the college experience,” she said. “It’s about making our services more obvious to students and making it more seamless in terms of figuring out what classes to take and what order to take them in.”

Greg and Lara’s passion for student success and equity is further demonstrated through their financial contributions to the college. They’ve established an end-of-year cash award for promising students in the physical sciences department, and they donate to Cuesta’s Assistance for Student Emergencies Fund, which provides monetary support for students who are low-income and need immediate assistance to remain in college.

“Community colleges typically get the lowest amount of funding for any of the educational entities in the state, yet we serve a lot of students who have a lot of needs,” said Greg. “We just feel it’s essential to help fund some of the great programs that the college provides for students.”

Lara believes that contributing even just a small amount can make a big difference. “In donating to a community college, your money can go farther and be more impactful,” she said. “We can give just a little bit to make one aspect of being a student a little easier and help make their challenges a little easier to overcome.” ■

BECOME A DONOR

There are various ways to donate to Cuesta College, monetary and otherwise. Call the Cuesta College Foundation at (805) 546-3279 to find out how you can support the college. You may also donate online at bit.ly/givetoCuesta. Gifts to the Cuesta Fund help to support the college’s priority needs.

A Message From the Foundation Executive Director

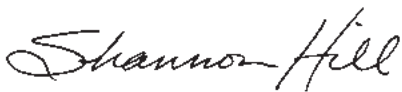
SHANNON HILL

Inspiration comes from many places. Your support of the Cuesta College Foundation this past school year has been inspiration in so many ways!

- You helped create a second year of free tuition for our local graduates, hundreds of which are on campus today, inspired to learn without burden of tuition.
- You created scholarships to help pay for the other costs of going to college—books, transportation, living expenses.
- You fed hungry students so that they could focus on learning and not their stomachs by supporting the college’s food pantry.
- You replaced old technology on campus to help close the digital divide for students with limited access.
- You drove down the cost of textbooks by funding textbook vouchers and invested in low- or no-textbook options.
- You supported individual service and academic programs by investing directly in the classroom and places like the student health centers, tutoring centers and libraries (on both campuses!).

I have found my inspiration in the students striving to change themselves and their world; in my colleagues at Cuesta College for creating an environment to make that happen; and in you—for creating more opportunities through your philanthropy.

Shannon Hill



Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and Foundation

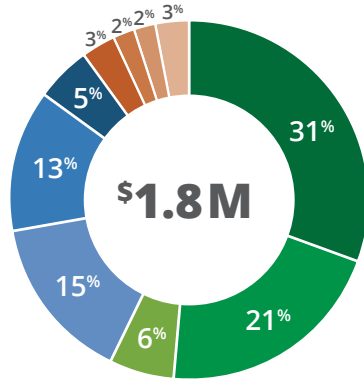


Foundation staff with the 2019 Educational Fundraising Award for overall performance.



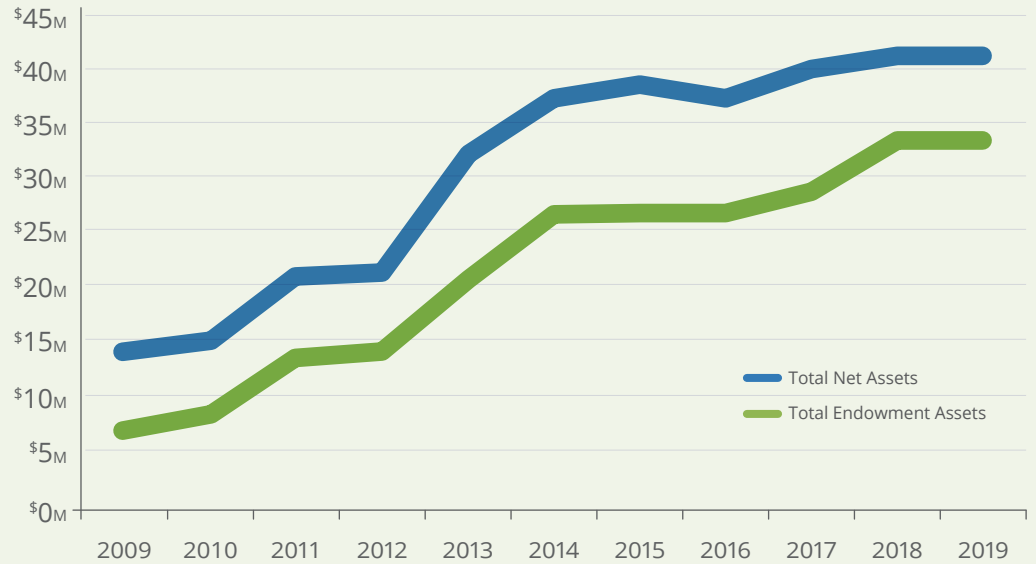
FOUNDATION IN NUMBERS

1.8 Million Raised



What does the \$1.8M raised support?

- 31% Endowments
- 21% Scholarships
- 6% Arts/Humanities
- 15% Math/Science/Athletics
- 13% Area of Greatest Need
- 5% Community Programs
- 3% Business/CTE
- 2% Library Support
- 2% North County Campus
- 3% Student Services



757 * 925 * 1.56 M * 951 K

student scholarships and departmental awards provided in the fiscal year 2018-2019

Promise students in Fall 2018 to get 2 years

dollars given to Cuesta College in the form of programmatic support

dollars given to Cuesta College scholarships, Promise, and awards

A Big Thank You to Our DONORS

Cuesta College awarded more scholarships and more money to more students than ever before at the 30th Annual Scholarship Reception on August 6th. A record-breaking 282 students received 510 scholarships totaling nearly \$390,000. Scholarship recipients are current students at Cuesta College, incoming transfers, and high school students attending in Fall 2019. Many students received more than one scholarship, which can be used for tuition, books, and other expenses. ■



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Clockwise from top photo: Alumni Drew Kirsh with Taylor Swift; Ag student Amber Eckert presenting her research; STEM Engage Scholarship recipient Riley Taft.