

SENIOR FOCUS

SUMMER 2025

**SAN JAC RECEIVES
EDUCATION
CHAMPION AWARD**



**ROBINSON FINDS
BEAUTY IN
'CONTROLLED CHAOS'
THROUGH MIXED
MEDIA ART**

**FROM LUMBER
TO LEARNING
WHY THIS BUSINESS
LEADER INVESTS
IN SAN JAC STUDENTS**



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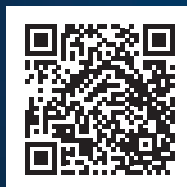
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**Visit San Jacinto College online at sanjac.edu.
Call us at 281-998-6150.**



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About San Jacinto College

Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation, as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA+ by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College, visit sanjac.edu.

SeniorFocus is published three times a year by San Jacinto Community College District, 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Suite 210, Pasadena, Texas, 77504, in partnership with Academic Marketing Services.

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NEWS & NOTES

FROM AROUND THE COLLEGE



San Jac receives Education Champion Award

San Jacinto College has received the Education Champion Award as a part of the 41st annual Governor's Volunteer Awards.

This award honors the College's commitment to service learning and its community service initiatives that provide students with hands-on experiences while benefiting the local community. The volunteer awards are presented by OneStar Foundation in partnership with the Office of the Texas Governor.

Service learning addresses community needs while giving San Jac students the chance to apply their knowledge in real-world settings. One impactful initiative is the See to Succeed eye care clinic, a collaborative effort with the Houston Health Department that provides vision care for Pasadena Independent School District students.

Each year, eye care technology students assist with exams, guide children in selecting frames, and help process prescriptions. In February 2025, nearly 1,400 K-12 students received comprehensive eye exams, with 96% also receiving eyeglasses.

The Governor's Volunteer Awards, hosted by Texas First Lady Cecilia Abbott, recognize outstanding individuals and organizations that have significantly contributed to their communities through volunteerism and service.

San Jac's selection as the Education Champion Award recipient highlights its dedication to fostering student engagement, civic responsibility, and workforce readiness.

Hutchins named new vice chancellor of fiscal affairs

San Jacinto College recently named Carin Hutchins its new vice chancellor of fiscal affairs.

Hutchins joined the College in 2020 as associate vice chancellor of finance. In this role, she oversaw the comptroller's office, student financial services, financial planning, analysis and budget, and the district records management office.

As the vice chancellor, Hutchins will lead several College departments, including facilities services, contracts and purchasing, auxiliary services, internal audit, safety, health and risk management, budgets, accounting and financial services, comptroller, office of grants management, office of emergency management, and the police department. She will also serve in an advisory board role with the San Jacinto College Foundation.

Hutchins began her career in public accounting working for Deloitte and Touche. She worked as assistant controller for the Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin and was later promoted to controller. Since that time, Hutchins has held positions with large community colleges.

She holds a master's in business administration from the University of Texas and is a certified public accountant.



Children's center re-accredited

The San Jacinto College Central Campus Children's Center has earned re-accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, achieving an exceptional 91.96% pass rate. The accreditation is valid through February 2030.

The center is one of only four facilities in the Deer Park, La Porte, and Pasadena area accredited by the association. With more than 30 years of experience, the National Association for the Education of Young Children is the nation's leading organization in early childhood education accreditation, setting comprehensive standards for program quality, professional practices, and operational excellence.

This accreditation is widely recognized as the gold standard for early childhood education programs, representing a commitment to operational excellence and high-quality care.

The center, which has served the community for over 20 years, underwent a comprehensive evaluation process, including classroom observations and portfolio reviews. The re-accreditation process began immediately following the previous accreditation in September 2019.

FROM LUMBER TO LEARNING:

WHY THIS BUSINESS LEADER INVESTS IN SAN JAC STUDENTS

■ By Courtney Morris

At 82, Dean Lawther gets straight to the point.

The one-time San Jacinto College student, former Deer Park city councilman, and longtime businessman became a Promise Partner for one simple reason: “Supporting San Jac supports local businesses.”

As a Promise Partner, Lawther helps ensure debt-free college is available through the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship to every high school graduate in the College’s taxing district.

More accessible college degrees mean better trained employees and a better local economy. And to him, that’s a good business deal.

Exploring business roots

Business savvy runs in the family. In the late 1950s, Lawther’s father bought and turned a struggling hardware store into Deer Park Lumber Co. Initially, it provided extra income while he built homes. Now the thriving company serves Houston Ship Channel industries.

Three generations have run Deer Park Lumber, which Lawther has now entrusted to his own sons Warren and Jeff.

Although he offices at the lumber company today, Lawther focuses on developing property and building homes. Between the two of them, he and his father have developed and built more than 2,500 lots and homes in Deer Park, including one featured in the movie “Urban Cowboy.”

Championing community college

In the 1960s, Lawther took some classes at San Jac before going on to earn a business degree — mainly through night classes — from the University of Houston. He has always valued education while recognizing not everyone needs to take the bachelor’s degree path.

“What I like about San Jac is it has a great ability to read the room,” he said. “We’re in the petrochemical capital of the U.S., and it’s one of the few colleges that realizes not everyone needs a four-year degree.”

At a Rotary Club luncheon, Lawther met Andrea Nguyen, San Jacinto College Foundation’s director of corporate and foundation relations. They soon became friends, and when Nguyen mentioned the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship, he decided to donate.

“It just seems to me San Jac is easily accessible to those who need it,” he said.

Lawther says San Jac is “extremely well-run,” always looking forward.

“If businesses don’t progress, they die,” he said. “San Jac has done a great job progressing and meeting the community’s needs.”

Building the community

With about six decades in business, Lawther prefers to fix problems rather than complain about them. Exhibit A: His decade of service on city council.



Dean Lawther with Andrea Nguyen

Nguyen calls it a builder mindset.

“Dean has not just built parts of Deer Park — he’s built lives,” she said. “He has many long-term employees who are like family to him. He gives people the tools they need to support their families.”

Supporting Promise has allowed him to give students the tools they need too. Having a workforce certificate or an associate degree covered 100% through the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship is a life-changing prospect for many who would not have attended college otherwise.

Why would Lawther encourage others to become Promise Partners?

“I would encourage them for the same reason I did,” he said. “It builds the community.”

Scan the QR code to learn more about becoming a Promise Partner.



SAN JAC CHEFS

SHARE SUMMER STAPLES

■ By Neesha Hosein

Summer meals don't have to be complicated to be memorable. If backyard grilling, a colorful salad, and a chilled dessert on a sunny day sound appealing, San Jacinto College chefs have you covered.

Chef Michael Schuster offers his easy-to-follow barbecue tips and a creamy homemade mac and cheese. Chef Melissa Menendez keeps it light and flavorful with a fresh cobb salad and zesty lemon dressing, and Chef Andrea Huerta wraps things up with an almost no-bake key lime pie. Simple, satisfying, and full of seasonal flavor — try these recipes for a delicious summer meal.



BARBECUE TIPS

BY CHEF MICHAEL SCHUSTER



1. **Fat is flavor:** Meats can dry out when barbecuing, so fat is your friend. (Think bacon.)
2. **Invest in a good meat thermometer:** Ace Mart Restaurant Supply is a local store for chefs. Pick up an inexpensive Bio-Therm pocket thermometer, and you are set.
3. **Know how to use the grill:** On a charcoal grill, you need a hot and cool side. Start your meat on the hot side, then move it to the cool side. You want to get those grill marks, then finish on the cooler side to prevent the meat from drying out. Remember: Slow and low for smoking meats.
4. **Experiment with rubs:** Try different rubs to find one you like. I look for consistency. I use a rub made by a Houston company that was in business for 75 years. (Sorry, keeping my secret.)
5. **Make your own barbecue sauce:** Barbecue sauce is made of ketchup, mustard, brown sugar, and malt vinegar. I like using honey to sweeten it up. You can kick it up with anything to find the right taste for you.

Finally, Schuster provides a basic mac and cheese recipe to accompany any summer barbecue.

The secret, he says, is to cook the pasta al dente (still firm). You can sprinkle your mac and cheese with toppings like crushed potato chips or Italian breadcrumbs to elevate it.

MAC 'N' CHEESE WITH BÉCHAMEL SAUCE

BY CHEF MICHAEL SCHUSTER

Ingredients:

- 1 ounce butter
- 1 ounce flour
- 10 ounces whole milk
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Pinch of white pepper
- Salt to taste
- 1 pound elbow macaroni, par-cooked (still firm)
- 1 cup or more of your favorite cheese



Directions:

1. **Melt the butter in a saucepan.** Stirring constantly, mix in the flour. Cook until the flour smell is gone and the roux smells nutty, approximately 2-3 minutes. Do NOT brown or burn the roux.
2. **Slowly add milk,** stirring constantly until the sauce thickens. Boil for 1-2 minutes. Add pinch of nutmeg and white pepper and salt to taste.
3. **Reduce heat and gradually add** your favorite cheese, stirring 2-3 minutes more. Remove from heat and pour over prepared noodles.
4. **Additional:** Top with more cheese, breadcrumbs, or crushed potato chips. Bake if desired.



COBB SALAD WITH LEMON DRESSING

BY CHEF MELISSA MENENDEZ

Ingredients:

For salad (2 servings):

- 3 cups romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 cup grilled chicken breast, sliced
- 2 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 1 hard-boiled egg, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 avocado, diced
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup blue cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup red onion, thinly sliced



For lemon dressing:

- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon honey (optional, for balance)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil



Directions:

1. **Make the lemon dressing:** In a small bowl or jar, whisk together the lemon juice, Dijon mustard, honey (if using), salt, and black pepper. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil while whisking until the dressing is well combined. Set aside.
2. **Assemble the salad:** Divide the chopped lettuce between two plates or bowls. Arrange the grilled chicken, bacon, hard-boiled egg, avocado, cherry tomatoes, blue cheese, and red onion in sections on top of the lettuce.
3. **Serve:** Drizzle the lemon dressing over the salad or serve it on the side. Toss if desired and enjoy!

Chef's tips:

- Swap feta or goat cheese for blue cheese, if preferred.
- Add a handful of toasted nuts or chickpeas for extra texture.
- If you want a creamier dressing, whisk in 1 tablespoon of Greek yogurt.



ALMOST NO-BAKE KEY LIME PIE

BY CHEF ANDREA HUERTA

Ingredients:

- 28 ounces sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tablespoon lime zest
- 7 fluid ounces key lime juice (22 limes)
- 4 ounces sour cream
- 1 prepared graham cracker crust

Directions:

1. **Preheat** oven to 350 degrees.
2. **Toast** the pie shell in the oven for 5 minutes. Cool completely.
3. **Whisk together** condensed milk, lime juice, and zest, then stir in sour cream.
4. **Pour** filling into the pie shell. Bake at 350 for 6 minutes. Remove from oven and refrigerate.
5. **Cut** pie once cooled overnight. Serve with whipped cream and berries.



SAN JAC TRANSFORMS LIVES WITH AFFORDABLE BACHELOR'S DEGREE OPTIONS

■ By Melissa Trevizo

Community colleges have long served as pillars in the community, contributing to workforce development, skills training, flexible learning, and the local economy. Launching its fourth bachelor's degree in spring 2026, San Jacinto College provides innovative pathways for students seeking advanced education.

“San Jacinto College aims to drive economic growth by transforming lives through education,” said Shelley Rinehart, assistant vice chancellor for instructional and support program efficacy. “Our goal is to improve our students’ economic and social mobility, creating a lasting legacy for future generations.”

Here are San Jac’s bachelor’s degrees:

Bachelor of Applied Science in education

If you’re a paraeducator/paraprofessional or early childhood educator, consider San Jac’s Bachelor of Applied Science in education with an emphasis in early childhood. This degree will prepare you to work with children from six weeks through third grade. You may also work in an early childhood organization like Head Start or apply for teacher certification to teach preschool through third grade in public schools.

“What sets our particular bachelor’s degree apart is that it is designed for working paraeducators,” said Rinehart. “If you’re

already working in a school district or at an early learning center, then you can use those observation hours for the degree.”

- **Location:** Central Campus or San Jac Online
- **Salary Potential:** \$64,650 (elementary school teachers)*

Bachelor of Applied Technology in logistics and supply chain management

This program, coming in spring 2026, provides you with an affordable, high-quality pathway into one of the nation’s fastest-growing industries.

With the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting a 19% growth in logistics jobs by 2033, the demand for skilled professionals continues to rise. The greater Houston area, a hub for global trade and transportation, needs more degreed professionals who can navigate complex modern supply chains.

- **Location:** North Campus or San Jac Online
- **Salary Potential:** \$72,157 (logisticians)*

Bachelor of Applied Technology in information technology with an emphasis in cybersecurity

This degree will give you a flexible pathway to enter the cybersecurity field:

- Start as a security analyst or security operations center analyst
- Specialize in network/cloud security, threat intelligence, incident response, and more
- Advance to high-level positions like chief information security officer

If you’re looking for versatile training to match a versatile market, look no further. With a cybersecurity degree, you can find a job that aligns with your unique interests and strengths. Cybersecurity jobs are popping up as fast as new cyber threats, and the field offers plenty of opportunities for career advancement.

- **Location:** South Campus
- **Salary Potential:** \$113,284 (information security analysts)*

Bachelor of Science in nursing (RN-to-BSN)

San Jac’s 100% online BSN program allows you to learn from where you are. The learner-centric BSN program follows an eight-week course model, which builds on previous education and experience.

The three-semester, 31-credit-hour program focuses on these concepts:

- Community health nursing
- Nursing research
- Public and global health policy
- Informatics
- Leadership

The BSN program answers the needs of both industry and working registered nurses. Top health care organizations advocate for entry-level nurses to hold BSN degrees, and many health care institutions prefer BSN-prepared nurses for leadership, specialized, and research roles. This program allows registered nurses with associate degrees to continue their education conveniently and affordably.

- **Location:** Central Campus or San Jac Online
- **Salary Potential:** \$108,164 (medical and health services manager)*

**texaswages.com, 2023 median wages, Gulf Coast region*

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac’s bachelor’s degrees.



SAN JAC PREPARES FOR

NEW VIRTUAL CAMPUS LAUNCH

■ By Neesha Hosein

San Jacinto College Online, the College's newest campus, will launch in fall 2025.

The virtual campus represents a major shift in how the College will support online students, offering a streamlined, consistent learning experience across all virtual courses.

"Initially, the College explored launching the virtual campus in a single phase," Dr. Ken Tidwell, chief officer for online learning, said. "However, following an almost two-year internal study of student enrollment trends and initial launch planning in summer 2024, it became clear that the scale of change required more planning and preparation."

A separate work group made up of instructional leaders, faculty, staff, and district-wide administrators explored additional plans for launch. Ultimately, the group recommended a phased approach rather than a one-time launch plan to the College's Strategic Leadership Team. As a result, the College adopted the phased approach to the launch.

New approach improves efficiency

With the new phased plan, the initial launch timeline remains unchanged, and the College will offer 60 certificates and degrees fully online.

The plan aims to improve the student experience significantly, addressing several common challenges that current online students face. One of the issues Tidwell cited was that many online students are unsure which campus their courses are offered through or whom to contact for assistance. This can lead to confusion and unnecessary delays.

"We had a situation this past term when a student didn't realize that they accidentally enrolled in an 8-week course," Tidwell said. "After realizing it, the student tried to get help at the campus they were familiar with but was told to contact another campus. When calling, they got voicemail. Eventually, the student was routed to San Jac Online, but by then, a lot of



time and energy had been wasted. Going to San Jac Online first would have resulted in a more seamless experience."

After its full implementation across all phases, San Jac Online will provide a single point of contact for students and College staff, allowing them to get the guidance they need faster without being bounced between multiple campuses.

Course options

A key aspect of the virtual campus will be consistency in online course offerings. All sections of a particular online course will feature aligned textbooks and a consistent basic course design. Tidwell explained this will allow students to focus on learning the material rather than struggling to navigate different course set-ups.

"From an academic standpoint, one of the goals of the new campus is to ensure that all sections of a specific online course title have an aligned textbook and a consistent learning management system course design, combining the strengths of our faculty expertise with the best practices in instructional design," Tidwell said. "Research has shown these positively impact online learner success at the course level."

Achieving the goals

One goal of San Jac Online is to simplify the process.

Students enrolled online may also take on-campus courses, giving them flexibility in how they learn.

For Tidwell, the most important goal of San Jac Online is clear — student success.

"Our goal in launching San Jac Online is to ensure the College strategically and operationally supports our faculty and staff who are working daily to meet the needs of students choosing online learning to achieve their goals," he said.

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac Online.



ROBINSON FINDS BEAUTY IN ‘CONTROLLED CHAOS’ THROUGH MIXED MEDIA ART

■ By Melissa Trevizo

San Jacinto College alumnus Romeo Robinson is an artist whose story is as vivid and textured as his work. Born and raised in New York City, Robinson has journeyed from the Air Force to art galleries, leaving a legacy of creativity and storytelling.

Growing up in New York City, Robinson crossed paths with an artist for the first time — a neighbor who painted, sculpted, and took photos for the public library system.

“He really loved us kids and would allow us to collect bugs for him to photograph,” Robinson said. “He would take these gorgeous photographs of insects.”

Robinson’s artistic journey began in the late 1970s at New York’s Germain School of Photography, which ignited his passion for capturing life through a lens. This passion continued as he served in the Air Force and had access to a photography lab, further developing his creative spark.

After moving to Houston, Robinson pursued new opportunities, earning a paralegal degree from San Jac in the late 1990s. After 34 years at Shell Oil, he also owned and operated a photography studio for many years. In 2012, at 62, he returned to San Jac to pursue an art degree.

“The instructors and the environment at San Jac were incredible,” he said. “I felt supported, whether I was studying legal assisting or art. That sense of community really shaped my experience.”

North Campus art professor and gallery curator Joe Clark fondly recalls Robinson’s impact on the classroom and beyond.

“Any art teacher would be thrilled to have someone like Romeo in their studio courses,” Clark said. “His curiosity and energy were, and still are, a constant source of inspiration to me

and our students. He’s the hardest working and most prolific artist I’ve ever met.”

After Robinson discovered his love for painting, his talents blossomed further at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Glassell School of Art, where he completed the Block Program in 2019.

He describes his approach to art as “controlled chaos,” delving into the human condition and addressing topics such as racism, immigration, and self-worth.

“I find people endlessly fascinating,” Robinson said. “Their emotions, struggles, and triumphs are fertile ground for an endless amount of creative work. Through my art, I aim to understand what’s happening in the world and why.”

Mixed media is Robinson’s preferred medium. Using acrylics, charcoal, pastel, and collage, he crafts textured, layered works that invite viewers to interpret and connect with the narratives he portrays.

“I’m more interested in what people see in my work than in imposing my own perspective,” he said. “Their interpretations often surprise and inspire me.”

Robinson preserves and celebrates Houston’s rich history, from exhibiting his art at San Jac’s North Gallery to contributing to shows at the Houston Museum of African American Culture, Lawndale Art Center, the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and countless others. Most recently, Robinson exhibited “Echoes in the Crowd” at the North Gallery.

“I love showing my work at the North Campus. It’s probably my third show with them now,” Robinson said. “I’ve lived in that community, and many of those kids don’t get the opportunity to travel to Houston to see much art. It’s a great opportunity to visit with the



students, answer their questions, and see what they are working on too.”

As a father, grandfather, and artist, Robinson draws profound inspiration from children.

“I’m drawn to their innocence and resilience. In today’s digital age, kids face unique challenges with social media and societal pressures,” he said. “I try to reflect positivity and hope in my work, especially for young viewers.”

With decades of creative exploration behind him, Robinson remains as passionate as ever.

“Art allows me to keep asking questions and exploring ideas,” he said. “It’s my way of contributing to discussions about the world and the challenges we face.”

Scan the QR code to learn more about the art and design program.



SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

May 2-3

Kaleidoscope Spring Dance Concert

7 p.m.

South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (S15.151)

May 16

Spring commencement

7 p.m.

NRG Stadium, 8825 Kirby Dr., Houston, Texas 77054.

May 26

Memorial Day

Closed

All campuses and online

June 2

Summer classes begin

June 19

Juneteenth National Independence Day

Closed

All campuses and online



July 4

Independence Day

Closed

All campuses and online

Aug. 18

Fall term begins

Sept. 1

Labor Day

Closed

All campuses and online

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar or call 281-998-6150.



Dennis
Art and Design

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5800 UVALDE RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77049

SAN JAC ONLINE
[SANJAC.EDU/ONLINE](https://sanjac.edu/online)