

SENIOR FOCUS

WINTER 2025



NEW YEAR, NEW GOAL
GIVING BACK TO STUDENTS

**CHANGING
LIVES**

SAN JAC RISES TO
THE CHALLENGE



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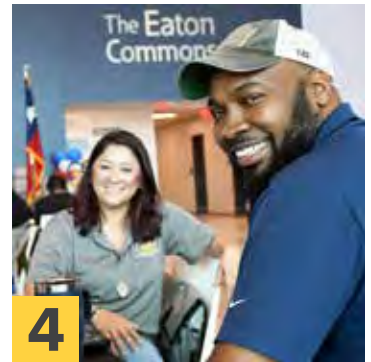


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Questions about San Jacinto College programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Contact Center at 281-998-6150. Comments or questions about the publication can be directed to the San Jacinto College External Relations Department at 281-998-6152.

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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.

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NEWS & NOTES

FROM AROUND THE COLLEGE

State of the College 2024 highlights San Jac's impact

San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer delivered her annual State of the College address Oct. 30, highlighting the resilience, innovation, support, and excellence — or RISE — that marked the past year.

Her theme resonated with more than 350 attendees, ranging from elected officials and donors to industry partners and employees.

“At San Jacinto College, we rise to meet the needs of our students and community so that our region remains economically strong and our students are prepared for their next steps after graduation,” Hellyer said during her presentation. “Our impact is seen and felt throughout this institution, our local communities, the region, and the state.”

Hellyer shared about new programs meeting workforce needs, including the new bachelor's degrees in education and cybersecurity.

She also recognized trailblazers like English department chair Dr. Celucien Joseph, San Jac's Minnie Stevens Piper Award nominee. Among his achievements, Joseph has created a new mentoring program at the College and redesigned a technical writing course.

In addition, the Chancellor celebrated alumni like Yakob Zumlot and Ted Tolley. Zumlot, who immigrated to the U.S. in 2014, considers San Jac his steppingstone to success and is now attending medical school. The oldest graduate at the spring 2024 commencement, Tolley finished his longtime degree goal thanks to his wife's encouragement and San Jac support.

To learn more about San Jac's impact, scan the QR code.



Central Campus theatre program honored

The Texas Educational Theatre Association recently named the San Jacinto College Central Campus an Exemplary Campus of Distinction. This honor recognizes the College's commitment to theatre education through achievement, resource curation, and theatre arts advocacy.

According to the release from the TxETA, “This remarkable achievement is a testament to the unwavering dedication, tireless efforts, and exceptional leadership Dr. Jerry Ivins [Central Campus theatre artistic director] has demonstrated throughout his tenure. His unwavering commitment to providing an enriching and nurturing educational environment has resulted in San Jacinto College's well-deserved recognition by the TxETA Awards committee.”

Texas colleges were evaluated in theatre course offerings, performance opportunities and venues, theatre curriculum, leadership, advocacy, technology, community service, and outreach.

“This recognition reflects the hard work of a dedicated group of artists who make the Central theatre program a premiere example of educational theatre in Texas,” said Ivins. “Central's artistic team reflects the College's continued excellence.”

In 2023, TxETA named Ivins the 2023 Higher Education Educator of the Year. Ivins, who has taught at San Jac for 29 years, is also involved in the University Interscholastic League one-act play competition as a judge, an adjudicator, and a licensed contest manager. He has served the TxETA as convention director for 13 years and served on the board of directors for five years.

The Central Campus was honored at an awards ceremony Sept. 28 in Galveston.

Board approves 2024 tax rate

The San Jacinto College Board of Trustees recently approved the 2024 tax rate for the College district.

The rate approved by the Board is 15.4868 cents per \$100 valuation of taxable property located within the San Jacinto Community College District, which is approximately \$0.008673 (5.93%) above the prior year's rate. It comprises an assessment for maintenance and operations (10.6954 cents) and a separate debt service tax rate (4.7914 cents).

The approved 2024 tax rate of \$0.154868 is less than the voter-approved rate of \$0.158151. For calendar year 2024, the average taxable value of a residence homestead in the San Jacinto Community College District is \$181,988. With the adoption by the governing body of a tax rate of \$0.154868 per \$100 of taxable value, the amount of taxes imposed this year on the average home would be \$281.84.

NEW YEAR, NEW GOAL

GIVING BACK TO STUDENTS

■ By Courtney Morris

Is Jan. 1 a bully or buddy? Do you think about everything you haven't accomplished yet or feel inspired to explore new opportunities?

However you view the new year, chances are you're already thinking about how to make 2025 different. If giving back tops your list, consider supporting San Jacinto College students.

Robert Cage, San Jacinto College Foundation executive director, shares how to get started:



Q: With so many worthy causes out there, why should I choose the Foundation?

A: Education and workforce training have an incredible impact on our community. For the past 60 years, San Jac has enriched the lives of those who live and work here. But it starts with investing in students.

The San Jacinto College Foundation's goal is to eliminate financial barriers, enhance access to education, and promote student success by increasing available resources.

Since 1996, we've provided more than 31,000 scholarships totaling over \$23.6 million to students. We've also provided \$1.5 million to faculty for educational innovations.

Q: What are San Jac students' greatest needs?

A: The biggest are scholarships (like the Promise @San Jac Scholarship) and emergency support. Many of our students are first-generation college students, and some are attending part time while working a job. They face multiple financial hardships during their academic journey. You get to help them when they have nowhere else to turn.

Q: How can I make a gift?

A: We make it easy. You can support students through:

- Cash gifts
- Matching gifts
- Planned giving (bequest, trusts, real estate, personal property)
- Memorial and tribute gifts
- Donor-advised funds
- Gifts of stocks and securities
- Recurring credit card or bank draft

Q: What about giving through my estate?

A: You can make a gift simply by naming San Jacinto College in your will or trust. By notifying the Foundation, you can work with us to plan the use of your gift and have your desired impact. For sample bequest information, please contact us at 281-998-6104.

Q: How much of my gift goes directly to students and programs?

A: The Foundation doesn't charge fees or operational costs on donor gifts, so every dollar goes directly to the area you want to support.

Q: I have more time than money. What are other ways I can support students?

A: You can still engage with San Jac and the Foundation by investing your time and talents. There are opportunities to volunteer at campus events, speak to students, and serve on event organization committees, advisory committees, and our Foundation board of directors.

Q: How will I see the impact I'm making?

A: As a donor, you'll receive the Foundation's annual scholarship reports, a donor impact report, and the Chancellor's Report to the Community.

You may not meet every student you're impacting, but you'll have a part in changing lives. I think about Kevin Rodriguez, an alumnus who is now teaching at San Jac. For Kevin, receiving a Foundation scholarship meant much more than getting financial help: "It symbolized belief — belief in my potential, my dreams, and my aspirations."

As a donor, you show students their dreams are not only possible but worth pursuing.

Three ways to give

Want to help San Jac students? Make your next gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation:

Online: Scan the QR code to give.



By mail: Send your check (made payable to San Jacinto College Foundation) to San Jacinto College Foundation, 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Suite 210, Pasadena, Texas 77504.

By Phone: Call us at 281-998-6104.



CHANGING LIVES

SAN JAC RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

■ By Courtney Morris

Rise. This word can mean many things — from moving upward and coming into being to exerting yourself to meet a challenge.

At San Jacinto College, it also describes what happens every day here. The College helps students rise above challenges to pursue a better future for themselves and their families.

At San Jac, an in-district high school graduate can earn a degree debt-free. A single mother can take online classes that fit around her kids and job. And a 75-year-old can pursue leisure learning for personal growth. Whatever their age or stage, students start here to create the future they want.

In her 2024 State of the College address, Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer focused on RISE — the Resilience, Innovation, Support, and Excellence that define this institution.

“At San Jacinto College, we rise to meet the needs of our students and community so that our region remains economically strong and our students are prepared for their next steps after graduation,” Hellyer said during her presentation. “Our impact is seen and felt throughout this institution, our local communities, the region, and the state.”

Read about some of the ways San Jac creates a brighter, stronger community:



CHALLENGER GAME



ALUMNUS SUCCESS

Resilience

Challenger Game: In March 2024, the San Jac Ravens baseball team hosted the fourth annual Challenger game day at the North Campus. As part of the national Little League Challenger Program, the local Challenger Division allows children and youth with physical and mental challenges to play and enjoy baseball.

Alumnus Success: While enrolling at San Jac might have been a small step for some, it was a giant leap for Kevin Rodriguez in 2014. In several classes, he scraped by without textbooks, unable to afford them. Juggling work, family, and full-time classes felt like an “uphill battle.” The turning point came after he received several San Jacinto College Foundation scholarships.

In January 2024, Rodriguez joined San Jac’s new biomanufacturing technology program as an instructor. Once a struggling student, he now trains students to manufacture life-saving therapies and drugs.

Innovation

Pandora Spectrometer: San Jac is leaping into global climate analysis after becoming a NASA-approved site for the Pandora Spectrometer.



PANDORA SPECTROMETER

Housed on the South Campus Science and Allied Health Building roof, this autonomous device allows students to research and help calibrate NASA’s satellite data. Pandora uses spectroscopy to study ultraviolet and visible wavelengths of light and measures total column profiles of trace gases in the atmosphere.

Lunar Landing: In February 2024, San Jac students and alumni made history by working on Odysseus, the first commercial spacecraft to



SEE TO SUCCEED



MARITIME CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



VETERAN RESOURCES

land on the moon Feb. 22. Intuitive Machines' IM-1 lunar lander is also the first U.S.-built craft to touch down on the moon since NASA's final Apollo mission in 1972. San Jac's EDGE Center and Intuitive Machines partner to give students the skills and experience to stand out in today's job market.

Support

See to Succeed: Each spring, San Jac's eye care technology and nursing students team with eye care professionals to provide Pasadena Independent School District students with free eye screenings, exams, and glasses fittings during the weeklong See to Succeed event. In 2024, more than 1,300 K-12 students participated, with 97% receiving glasses.

Veteran Resources: San Jac honors veterans and shares helpful resources during its annual Veteran and Military Affiliate Resource Fair open to the community each November. The half-day fair includes a veteran scholarship presentation, booths, workshops, lunch, an industry panel, and more.

Excellence

Maritime Center of Excellence: Equipping students for seafaring success, the Maritime Campus earned the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's 2024 Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education. San Jac is the only Texas institution designated among 50 maritime training locations across 17 states and Guam.

Aspen Prize Finalist: San Jac numbers among 10 finalists competing for the 2025 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence to be awarded this April. The \$1 million award is the nation's signature

recognition of community colleges with high student success, strong support, and equitable outcomes. San Jac has placed as a top 10 finalist in each of Aspen's last five award cycles.

Want to learn more? Scan the QR code for more about San Jac's community impact.





LONGTIME BOARD CHAIR LEAVES LASTING LEGACY



Former San Jacinto College Board of Trustees Chair Marie Flickinger passed away Monday, Nov. 11, shortly after retiring from the Board after nearly 30 years of service to the institution.

Flickinger was a fierce advocate for student success. Along with her fellow trustees, she worked tirelessly to remove barriers for students, enabling them to earn their higher education credentials. She was passionate about the work being done at San Jac, and her dedication will leave a legacy.

“I have been fortunate in my lifetime to do a lot of things, but what has given me the most satisfaction has been serving on the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees,” Flickinger said before her retirement. “When you serve alongside individuals who are passionate, dedicated, and focused on student success, it makes you feel good about the work you’ve done. I know that my fellow trustees will continue the important work and that this institution will continue to be a leader in higher education.”

In 1995, Flickinger was elected as the first woman on the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees. She has championed San Jacinto College since day one, putting students and employees at the heart of every decision. During her nearly three decades on the Board of Trustees, the College has grown its enrollment, added new campuses, unified as one College, increased the number of programs, simplified tuition, and has consistently been ranked one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute.

Scan the QR code to read more.



ESCOBEDO

HELPS STUDENT-ATHLETES SUCCEED ON AND OFF THE FIELD

■ By Neesha Hosein

Silvia Escobedo has been part of San Jacinto College's North Campus athletics and physical education departments for almost a decade, providing valuable support to both coaching staff and student-athletes.

Escobedo helps ensure smooth office operations while helping student-athletes navigate their academic journey. She enjoys assisting students from application to graduation and everything in between.

She started as a federal work-study in the veteran success center at the North Campus while working on her Associate of Arts in business. After graduating in 2015, Escobedo was hired into her current position. Her experience helps her understand things from students' perspective.

"Many of our student-athletes are away from home for the first time, and they need extra support with things like the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, tech support, Blackboard, the SOS system, and more," Escobedo said. "I'm here to help them or refer them to the appropriate person or department to get their issues resolved as quickly as possible so they can focus on their studies and the field."

Best part of the job

Escobedo feels lucky to work with an "amazing team" of coaches and student-athletes.

"Year after year it gives me great joy to know that by taking care of the office operations, the coaches can fully focus on coaching our Ravens baseball players to be successful on the field and chart a brighter future on their baseball careers beyond San Jac," she said.

Escobedo believes San Jac is a great place to work because student success is at the heart of everything the College does.

"That is what keeps me here," she said. "Each employee, faculty, or administrator contributes in their own way, and collectively we complete the pathway to student success. As one of the Top 10 colleges in the nation, San Jac is making a big impact on our community, with graduation and accreditation rates showing it is the best place to work and pursue higher education."

Escobedo feels a great sense of accomplishment and plans to continue helping students achieve their goals toward graduation and beyond, whether they enter the workforce or transfer. Some student-athletes have gone on to play at four-year universities such as Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns, Indiana State Sycamores, and the New Mexico University Lobos.

"Most of our players get drafted in the minor leagues and work their way up to the Major Leagues," she said. "We've had a few lucky enough to get drafted right after graduating from San Jac. It is very humbling to look them up online and see where they are at and know that San Jac took part in their career, and I too had a small part in it."

On a personal note

"I'm an Army veteran," Escobedo said. "I served two years active duty, nine years reserves, and deployed twice to Iraq. I am very proud and humbled to be first-generation [first-time college graduate and a first-time military service member]."

Outside work, Escobedo relaxes by working in her front yard flower bed and walking her dogs.



“Year after year it gives me great joy to know that by taking care of the office operations, the coaches can fully focus on coaching our Ravens baseball players to be successful on the field and chart a brighter future on their baseball careers beyond San Jac.”



**FROM ENERGY
INDUSTRY LEADER TO
ASPIRING ARTIST:**

GALBRAITH'S JOURNEY BACK TO SAN JAC

■ By Melissa Trevizo

Native Houstonian Dennis Galbraith earned his business degree from San Jacinto College in 1978. After a career in the energy sector, he has now embarked on a new chapter by pursuing an arts degree at San Jac.

Galbraith spent his career managing major projects in procurement, contract development, and strategic cost analysis. His contract negotiation and risk assessment expertise made him a transformational leader in the energy industry for many years.

Beginning his career in the nuclear engineering department in 1974 with Houston Lighting and Power, Galbraith later transitioned into roles focusing on uranium fuel contracts and supply chain management. His career ultimately evolved to overseeing power plant construction contracts with a team of six people across the U.S., and he worked with both RRI Energy and NRG Energy during his tenure.

In April 2023, after nearly 50 years in the workforce, Galbraith retired and decided to follow his passion for art.

“I first became interested in art in 2008 after attending the Bayou City Art Festival,” he said. “The experience inspired me to start drawing, particularly with charcoal and graphite pencils.”

While he took art classes at Rice University and the Art League of Houston, as well as pursued self-study, Galbraith felt a formal arts education would be the next step after retirement. This led him back to San Jac.

Now enrolled in various art classes, Galbraith is working toward an Associate of Applied Science in fine arts, focusing on both traditional and digital design. He enjoys the freedom of learning new skills at his own pace, without the same pressures as younger students who are just starting their career journey. From the first drawing course to two-dimensional design, he is fully committed to expanding his artistic abilities and embracing the learning process.

Galbraith is also grateful for the tuition exemption for students over 65, an added benefit of returning to school.

“At my age, I get the benefit of some programs the state offers, and I really appreciate that,” he said. “I understand it depends on available space and funding, but I haven’t had any issues. There’s always been room for me in the classes

I’ve needed, and I’ve had a great experience.”

Galbraith believes in the importance of lifelong learning and pursuing passions, even after a successful career in a different field. He is excited to give back to his classmates.

“Who knows?” he said. “Someday I could even be an adjunct professor here at San Jac.”

For others considering a return to college later in life, his advice is simple: “Just do it. Don’t put it off.”

In his view, returning to school has been both rewarding and fulfilling, providing him with an outlet for his creativity. Whether experimenting with design principles or exploring digital art tools like Photoshop, Galbraith is excited about his new path in the world of fine arts.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the fine arts program.



SAN JAC HAPPENINGS



Jan. 13

Spring Classes Begin

All campuses and online

Jan. 20

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Closed

All campuses and online

Feb. 6

College Community Day

No classes

Feb. 12-15

“Children of a Lesser God”

7:30 p.m.

\$10 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

Feb. 16

“Children of a Lesser God”

2:30 p.m.

\$10 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

Feb. 17

Summer registration opens

Feb. 21-22

Artists for Hope Charity Concert

7 p.m.

Ticket Price TBA | South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (\$15.151)

March 17-23

Spring Break

Closed

All campuses and online

April 3-5

“Glengarry Glen Ross”

7:30 p.m.

\$10 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

April 6

“Glengarry Glen Ross”

2:30 p.m.

\$10 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

May 2-3

Kaleidoscope Spring Dance Concert

7 p.m.

South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (\$15.151)



*For community engagement events, register at community.engagement@sjcd.edu or 281-478-2786.

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar.



Anthony
Behavioral Science

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Apply, register, and pay at sanjac.edu

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PASADENA, TX 77505

MARITIME CAMPUS
3700 OLD HWY. 146
LA PORTE, TX 77571

SOUTH CAMPUS
13735 BEAMER RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77089

GENERATION PARK CAMPUS
13455 LOCKWOOD RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77044

NORTH CAMPUS
5800 UVALDE RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77049

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