

COLLEGE HISTORY AND VISION

History of the College

The name “Cuyamaca College” was selected with the vision of an institution that exemplifies the “community” in community college. Decades later, the commitment to this vision is stronger than ever. Cuyamaca College actively promotes equity and social justice by employing educational strategies that build upon the strengths of our diverse socio-cultural student population. We are committed to establishing a pathway to social and economic mobility through our comprehensive range of programs, certificates, degrees, transfer opportunities, and career prospects.

The History of the Campus

Cuyamaca College, alongside its sister campus, Grossmont College, make up the

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District: A prestigious pair that have been serving the community for over six decades.

The name for the college reflects the region's history and heritage. According to Dr. Stan Rodriguez, Kumeyaay Studies coordinator and Santa Ysabel Kumeyaay Elder, Cuyamaca” is a word originating from the Kumeyaay language, meaning “Are you standing behind the rain clouds?” It is perhaps a reference to the location of the college at the base of Mt. Miguel, one of the highest points in San Diego County. San Diego is home to eighteen reservations, more than any other county in the country, twelve reservations are of the Kumeyaay people. The name “Cuyamaca” is a tribute to the land upon which the campus is built, acknowledging and honoring the people which have lived in the area for thousands of years.

The Cuyamaca College campus is located in the East San Diego County community of Rancho San Diego, nestled in a suburb just outside the city of El Cajon on a verdant 165-acre site that was at one time a part of the Old Monte Vista Ranch.

The campus site was acquired by the Board of Trustees in September 1972 and the college officially opened in fall 1978, with 1,947 students and nine associate-degree programs. Its first president was Dr. Wallace F. Cohen.

Today, Cuyamaca has just over 12,740 students, and provides around 195 degrees and certificates, including both academic and career pathways.

Key Events

Thirty-eight students made up Cuyamaca College's first graduating class in May 1979. The early '80s saw the construction of facilities housing two flagship programs – Automotive Technology and Ornamental Horticulture – and the naming of Dr. Samuel Ciccati as the college's second president. During Dr. Ciccati's tenure, the college established what is today known as “The Grand Lawn.” The lawn was the first green area established on campus and completed in partnership with the California Conservation Corps. During an “all hands day” faculty and staff brought tools and worked between classes and on breaks to clear the area in preparation for the Corps crew to dig trenches for irrigation and a company to spray seed.

The following years marked the expansion in earnest of Rancho San Diego and by fall 1988, Cuyamaca's enrollment had reached 3,600 students. In the late 1980s, the campus began nearly twenty years of expansion with the opening of the Learning Resource Center, a 30,000-square-foot, glass-covered building with distinctive architecture that houses the college library and other educational resources.

Soon thereafter, in the 1990s, the privately-funded Heritage of the Americas Museum opened, as well as a new 20.3-acre physical education facility with a fitness center, gym, tennis and volleyball courts, soccer and ball fields, and an Olympic track. In 1994, Rancho San Diego Parkway opened as the new main entrance, providing better access to the campus.

That year, Dr. Sherrill Amador also began her tenure as college president and she helped to facilitate the Joint Powers Agreement between the college and area water districts to open the Water Conservation Garden on the campus – a must-visit for all home gardening and landscaping enthusiasts. Also under Dr. Amador's tenure was the opening a one-stop Student Services Center and the unveiling of the Child Development Center. The whimsical facility serves as both a childcare facility for the campus and community, and a learning laboratory for students in Cuyamaca's Child Development Studies program.

Dr. Geraldine M. Perri took over the reins as college president in 2002, the same year that East County residents approved Prop. R, a \$207 million construction bond measure to finance upgrades and new building construction at the District's two colleges. During a period of rapid enrollment growth, Prop. R transformed the campus into a high-tech learning magnet, bringing older facilities into the digital age and adding several new buildings: the Science and Technology Center (now the Science and Mathematics Building), the Student Center, the Business and Technology buildings, and a \$45 million Communication Arts Center. There, a well-appointed performing arts theater built to professional acoustical standards has become a major community asset as a high-demand site for community performances, assemblies, and business forums.

In 2006, the neighboring Kumeyaay Community College partnered with Cuyamaca College to provide Kumeyaay Studies language courses, eventually growing into an accredited Kumeyaay Studies degree program in 2016. The program was the first in the state offering a degree focused on language, culture, and history of a specific Native American group.

Prop. R's major construction at Cuyamaca College drew to a close in 2011 with the expansion of the LRC. Other campus highlights during those years included music instructor Pat Setzer's selection as one of four community college instructors statewide to win the 2010 Hayward Award for Excellence in Education, and in 2011, the appointment of Dr. Mark J. Zacovic to the post of college president.

In November 2012, East County voters once again showed their support for the college district with the passage of Prop. V, a \$398 million bond measure. Also in 2012, Cuyamaca College was one of three community colleges in the state to receive the inaugural Energy and Sustainability Award from the California Community College Board of Governors. The college was recognized for its sustainable landscaping initiatives.

In 2013, the college was ranked among the nation's “best of the best” veteran-friendly schools by U.S. Veterans Magazine. The college was the only community college in San Diego County to earn the distinction, and it secured its spot again in 2014 as a repeat winner of the coveted award.

In October 2015, Dr. Julianna Barnes, who previously served Cuyamaca College as vice president of student services, returned to take the helm

as president. Under her leadership, the college transformed its approach to placement and teaching math, English, and ESL. Today, all students are placed in math and English based upon high school transcripts and GPA, not a placement exam. Cuyamaca College was the first community college in California to embrace this approach and support faculty in this effort. Cuyamaca College received the prestigious Dr. John W. Rice Diversity & Equity Award as well as national recognition as the only California community college selected as a finalist for the 2019 *Examples of Excelexica* by Excelexica in Education.

In January 2019, the college opened the premier water and wastewater training facilities in California. The program was established in collaboration with the industry and will train the next generation of water professionals.

In March 2020, government mandated Covid-19 regulations were set into place and Cuyamaca College transformed all instruction and operations online for the first time in its history. Using innovation and technology, the college continued to support students with counseling services, basic rights support including food and housing, and quality instruction.

On July 18, 2022, Dr. Jessica Robinson MSW was named interim president of Cuyamaca College, after serving as the vice president of student services since 2018. Less than a year later, she would be named the college's seventh president and the first alumna to lead the college.

In 2022, Cuyamaca College was named "Best for Vets" by The Military Times and was recognized again for its efforts to support student success in English courses. As a Champion for Excelling in Equitable Course Placement in Campus-wide English Enrollment, Cuyamaca College provides every Latinx and Black student with access to and support in transfer-level English. Cuyamaca College would receive this award again in 2023.

The new heart of campus, the Student Services Building (G-Building), officially opened its doors on February 9, 2023. Funded by Prop V, the 36,374 square foot building serves as the front door to campus with a welcome center, drop off circle, courtyard and housing all student services. The building fundamentally changes the way in which students engage in with the campus.

Cuyamaca College continues to serve diverse communities with personalized attention and a commitment to equity, excellence, and social justice. Yesterday, today and tomorrow, Cuyamaca College remains unwavering in its mission to meet the comprehensive educational and workforce training needs of East County.

College Vision, Mission and Values

Cuyamaca College Vision Statement

Equity, Excellence, and Social Justice Through Education

Cuyamaca College Mission Statement

Cuyamaca College advances equity and social justice through student-centered and innovative approaches to education. We strive to create unique and meaningful learning experiences that build upon the strengths and socio-cultural experiences of our diverse student population and the communities we serve by providing programs that lead to certificates, degrees, transfer, career opportunities, and ultimately social and economic mobility.

Cuyamaca College Values

- Student-centered
- Equity
- Student Success
- Innovation
- Excellence
- Social Justice
- Community

Educational Objectives

In order to maximize the opportunity for the development of individuals' personal, social and intellectual qualities, the college provides:

An **instructional** program:

- **Transfer** courses equivalent to the lower division curriculum of universities and colleges for students who plan to continue their education at a baccalaureate institution.
- **Career and technical education** courses to provide technical skills and knowledge for beginning employment, retraining and advancement, respond to local business and industry workforce development and workforce training directions.
- **General education** courses to broaden knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, to develop analytical ability and critical thinking, and to foster interest in lifelong learning in the educational, scientific and cultural fields essential for effective participation in a diverse and complex society.
- **Developmental** courses to assist inadequately prepared students to succeed in college course work.

A **student services** program:

- **Academic, vocational and personal support** services to provide students with sufficient opportunity to achieve educational success.
- **Co-curricular activities** to provide opportunities for personal development and social responsibility.

Learning program and services:

- Information literacy program designed to help students to find answers to questions, whether posed in the classroom or based on personal interests.
- Library collections where students have equitable access to current research information.
- Research guidance to support guided pathways initiatives.

A **workforce development** program:

- **Education and training** that contributes to continuous workforce improvement of regional business and industry and is in many cases grant funded.

Educational Philosophy

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Governing Board believes that a community college should provide experiences that will greatly broaden students' educational opportunities and strengthen society's democratic institutions. Cuyamaca College is committed to provide an education through which students may create rewarding lives, productive for themselves and for society, based on an understanding of

the relationship between the past, and the challenges of the present and the future.

Cuyamaca College accepts and is committed to the following premises:

- The democratic way of life allows each individual the personal freedom and initiative consistent with his/her responsibilities to other persons.
- The college recognizes the value of our diverse and individual needs, interests, and experiences, vary greatly.
- The maximum development of the personal, social, and intellectual qualities of each individual must be encouraged.
- The development and fulfillment of the individual and the development of the community are increasingly interdependent.

An educational environment dedicated to these philosophic premises will produce individuals prepared for life and citizenship in a complex, diverse society and global economy.

All segments of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District contribute to and participate in the development and success of our students.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) are a promise to the communities that Cuyamaca College graduates and those transferring to a four-year college or university, will be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities contained within all of the ILOs, based on general education and discipline-specific courses. Cuyamaca College students who earn a certificate, or have taken courses for personal educational development, will be expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities specified within one or more of the ILOs.

Upon reviewing results of prior years' graduating student surveys, the Student Learning Outcome and Assessment Committee (SLOAC) recommended revisions to the College's ILOs in Spring 2019. The revisions were approved by the Academic Senate in April 2019 and Cuyamaca College Council in May 2019.

1. **Communication Competency:** Students will communicate information, arguments, and opinions effectively to different audiences through various modalities, including listening, speaking, and writing.
2. **Critical Thinking Competency:** Students will analyze and evaluate qualitative and quantitative information, and synthesize findings to make decisions within various contexts.
3. **Cultural Competency:** Students will interact effectively with others, taking into account their diverse backgrounds, and work well in cross-cultural situations.
4. **Professional Responsibility:** Students will practice ethical and civil conduct in professional environments, as well as resolve conflict and build alliances.

Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District Vision, Mission, and Value Statements

Vision

Transforming lives through high-quality educational programs and services that meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

Mission

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District provides high-quality, equitable learning opportunities to eastern San Diego County and beyond. We prepare students to meet changing community and workforce needs, while advancing social justice and economic mobility.

Values

- **Diversity** – Value and invite multiple perspectives in discussions and decision making; create space for historically excluded and marginalized voices to be amplified.
- **Equity** – Ensure students who have historically been marginalized and excluded have the opportunity to succeed in higher education by calling attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes and actively working to eliminate equity gaps in student access and success. Commit to ensuring employees who have historically been marginalized and excluded have the opportunity to succeed in their profession.
- **Student-Centeredness** – Ensure the student experience is at the forefront of our decision-making in programs, services, processes, and policies, creating opportunities and clear pathways for students to reach their educational goals.
- **Creativity and Innovation** – Value the capacity for ingenuity and originality on our campuses and within our communities.
- **Pursuit of Excellence and Continuous Improvement** – Pursuit of Excellence and Continuous Improvement – Strive to continuously reflect, learn, and improve to ensure excellence in our programs, services, and operations.
- **Integrity** – Commit to acting and speaking truthfully and responsibly and holding ourselves and others accountable to this standard.
- **Mutual Respect** – Strive to build a community of inclusiveness, compassion, empathy, and learning marked by mutual respect and consideration of our differences.

Academic Freedom Board Policy 4030

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca College District Governing Board shall promote public understanding and support of academic freedom for the implementation of the educational philosophy of Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District. Academic freedom is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the instructor in teaching, and of the student to freedom in learning. It carries with it duties correlative with rights.

1. Instructors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching material that has no relation to their subject. The intent is not to discourage what is "controversial." Controversy is at the heart of the free academic inquiry that this entire policy is designed to foster. Instructors should avoid persistently intruding material that has no relation to their subject.
2. Instructors are citizens, members of a learned profession, and may be viewed by those outside of the District as representatives of the District. When they speak or write as citizens outside of their roles with the District, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and instructors, they should remember that the public might judge their profession

and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the District.

3. As colleagues, faculty members have obligations that derive from the code of ethics (adopted by both the Grossmont College Academic Senate [11/16/92] and the Cuyamaca College Academic Senate [4/6/95]). Faculty members should engage in inclusive conduct and should not discriminate against or harass colleagues and students. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates. In the exchange of criticism and ideas, faculty members show due respect for the opinions of others. Such exchanges shall focus upon the substance and content rather than personal characteristics of individuals. Uncivil, intemperate, or abusive language and behavior (such as bullying, threatening, or disparaging remarks) is contrary to a productive and safe working and educational environment. This does not contravene academic freedom and free exchange of ideas and opinions, but requires accuracy, appropriate restraint, and respect for the professional expression of others, and an awareness of the potential impact on students.
4. Instructors are entitled to full freedom in academic research and publication, subject to the adequate performance of their other academic duties, but research and publication for pecuniary return should be based upon an understanding consistent with the collectively bargained agreement between the District and the exclusive bargaining representatives.