



MERCED  
COLLEGE



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2019

[www.mccd.edu](http://www.mccd.edu)

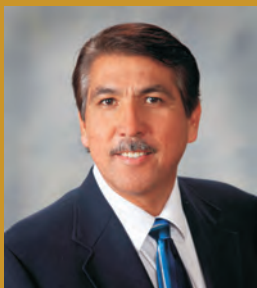
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# Message from THE PRESIDENT



Merced College is growing our community. We provide the most affordable - now free for most - education with the highest quality programs leading to degree completion, transfer, workforce development, and career technical education certification. As the largest institution of higher education in Merced County, with 16,348 students served in 2017-18, we are committed to student success and access - one student at a time.

Our motto, *students are our focus and we are known by their success*, represents the core of our mission. For nearly 60 years, Merced College has been leading innovation through best practice educational programs and services. We have model, fast-track career technical education programs, accelerated curriculum, high profile transfer agreements, robust degree and certificate programs, and one of the nation's best workforce development and training programs.

Often times, when out and about, I am reminded by alumnus of the impact we have on this community. Whether it is a graduate of an Ivy League university explaining to me that their best classroom instructors were those they had while attending Merced College or the single mom whose hourly income more than doubled due to their enrollment and completion in one of our career technical education programs, I am always struck by the widespread impact Merced College has had and continues to have on individuals, families, and our community.

This past year, the College experienced many successes, including reaffirmation of our accreditation, the completion of several new master plans, a record number of degree and certificate completers, the largest gift in our College's history, and the implementation new guided pathway initiatives to improve student success - to name a few.

As you read this report, I am confident you will recognize our institution's strengths and opportunities. Additionally, you will see a reflection of our mission, vision, and core values. We welcome your support in helping us advance our mission and innovations to better serve our students and this amazing community. I continue to be proud of the consistently great work completed at Merced College. On behalf of Merced College, the Board of Trustees, and the Merced College Foundation, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

**Chris Vitelli**  
Superintendent/President

# MISSION

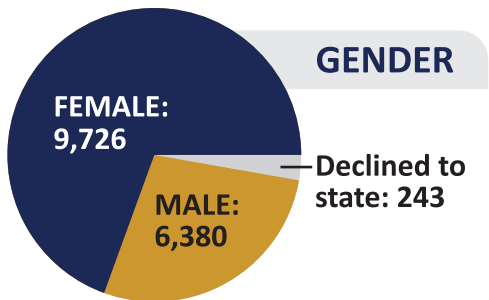
Growing our community through education and workforce training:

- ☑ lifelong learning
- ☑ basic skills
- ☑ career technical education
- ☑ transfer degree/certificate programs

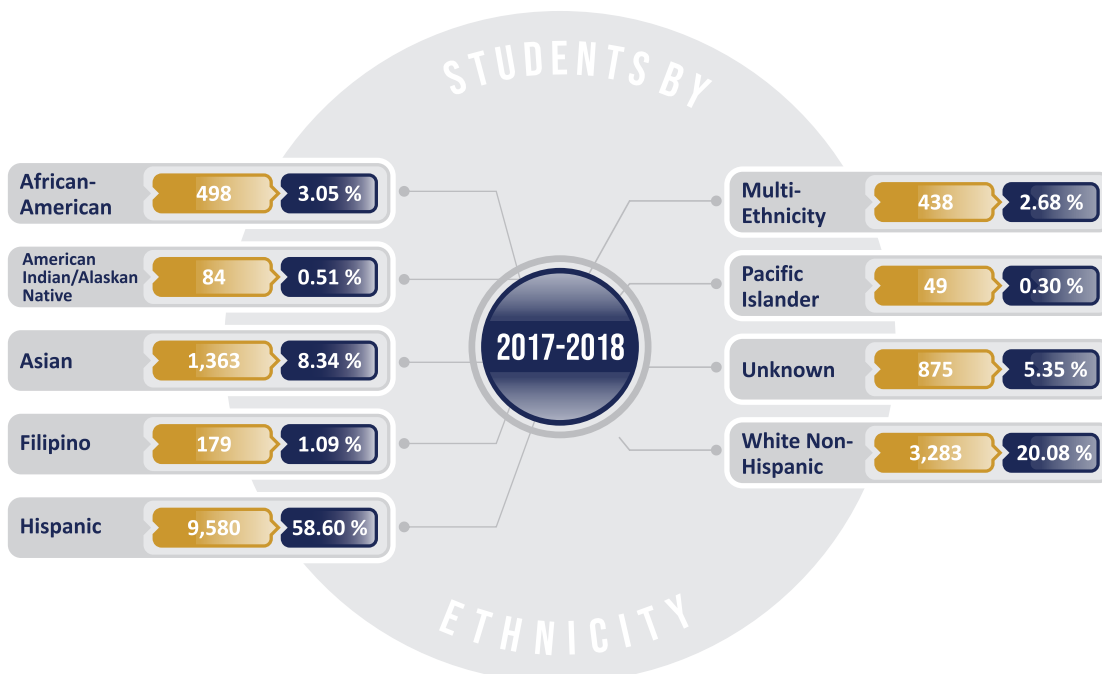
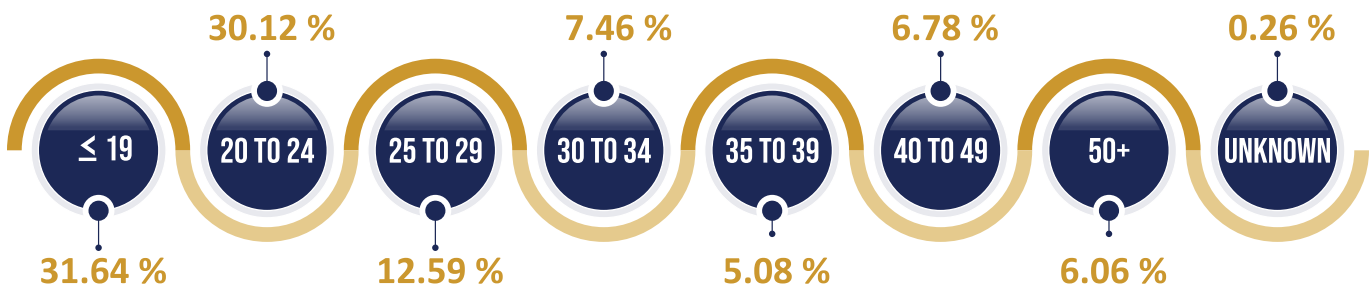
Ensuring student success through equitable access, continuous quality improvement, institutional, and student achievement.

## TOTAL STUDENTS

2017-2018: 16,349 headcount



## AGE GROUP



# BY THE NUMBERS

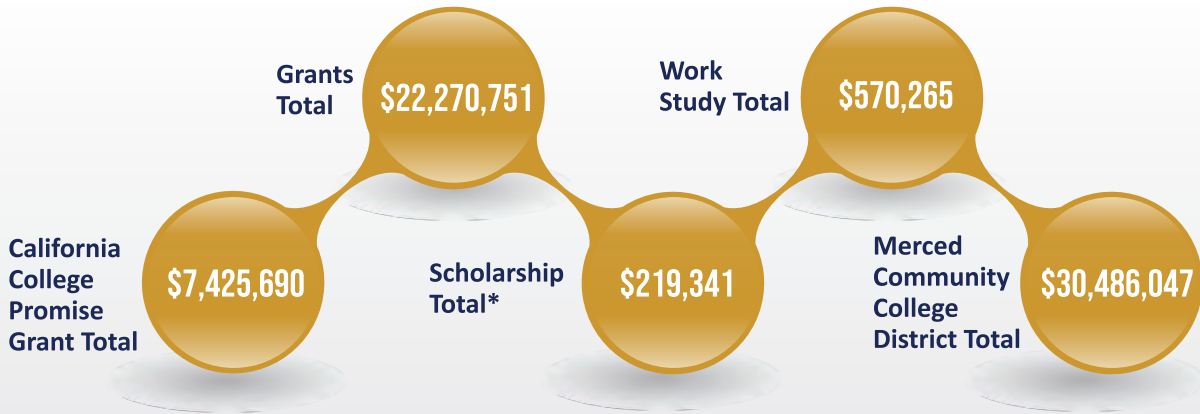
## TOP 10 DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES AWARDED 2017-2018

CSU General Education Breadth (CT)	Certificate requiring 30 to < 60 semester units	369
Social and Behavioral Science (AA)	Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree	169
Psychology (AAT)	Associate in Arts for Transfer (A.A.-T) Degree	139
Business Administration (AST)	Associate in Science for Transfer (A.S.-T) Degree	98
Administration of Justice (AST)	Associate in Science for Transfer (A.S.-T) Degree	71
Psychology (AA)	Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree	60
Registered Nursing (AS)	Associate of Science (A.S.) degree	57
Automotive Technology (CT)	Certificate requiring 18 to < 30 semester units	46
Health Sciences (AA)	Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree	38
History (AAT)	Associate in Arts for Transfer (A.A.-T) Degree	36
Sociology (AAT)	Associate in Arts for Transfer (A.A.-T) Degree	36

### TOP 5 CSU and UC\* TRANSFER INSTITUTIONS 2017-2018



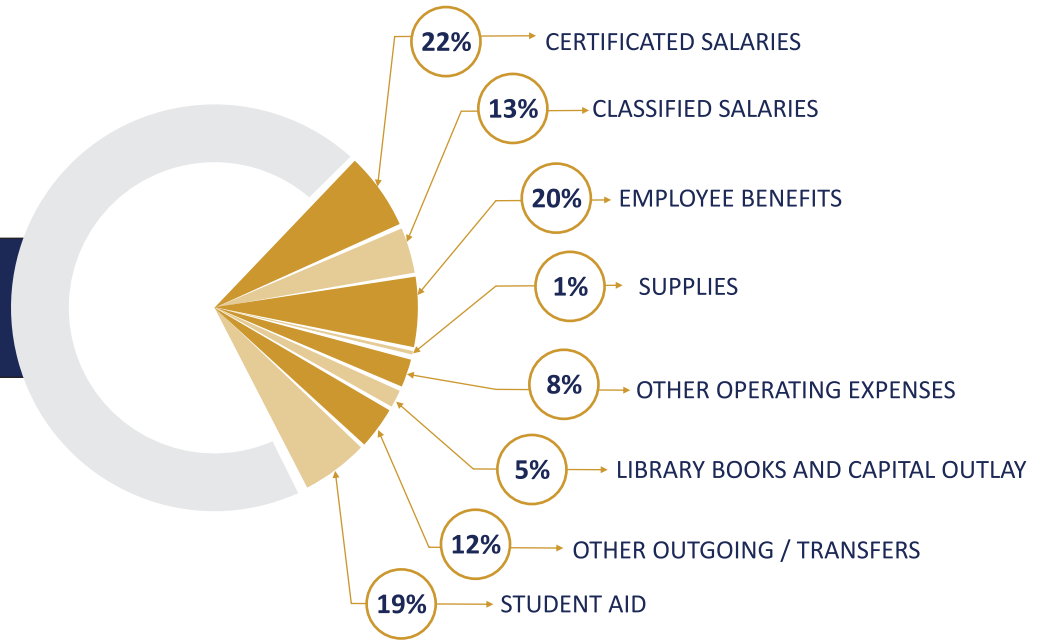
# FINANCIAL AID AWARDED, 2017-2018



\*Includes Institutional Scholarship Awards

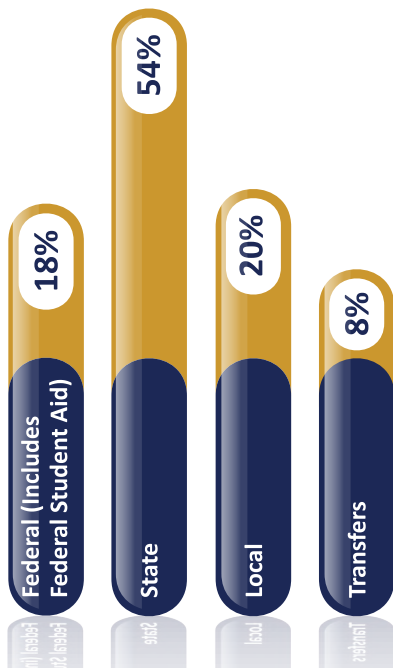
## EXPENDITURES

Total: \$115,943,515



## REVENUES

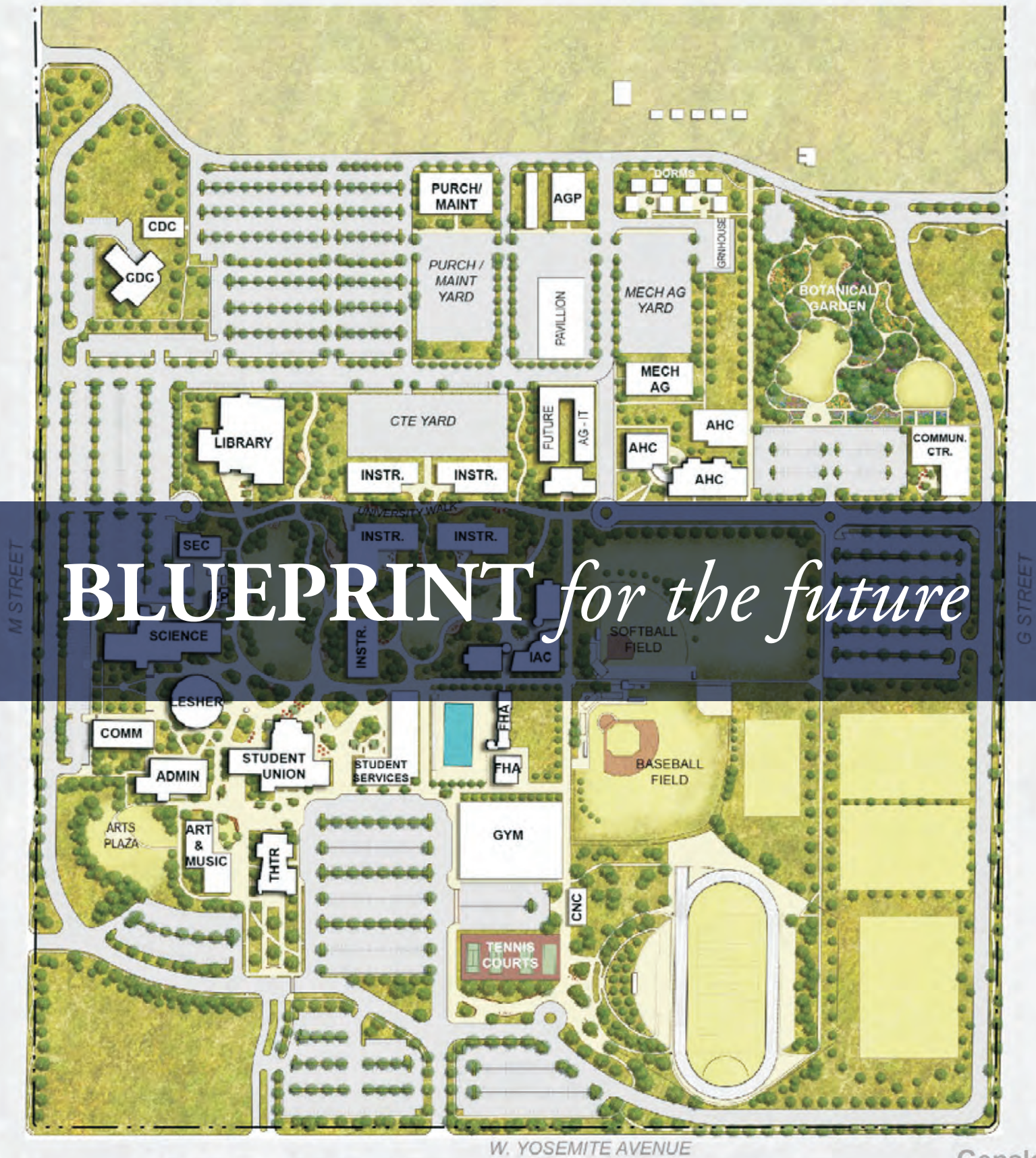
Total: \$116,055,595



### Snapshot:

In 2017-2018, students received \$30,486,047 in financial aid. The College's total revenue was \$116,055,595 and expenditures were \$115,943,515.

# PLANNING FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS



**BLUEPRINT** *for the future*

W. YOSEMITE AVENUE

Gensler

# LONG-RANGE PLANNING

## Educational Master Plan

The Merced College Educational Master Plan (EMP) is one of the most important documents we produce as an institution. It defines who we are, and more importantly, who we want to be. It is the roadmap to what educational programs we offer to our community as well as the foundation for District's Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP).

With the assistance of the Collaborative Brain Trust, Merced College finalized its Educational Master Plan (EMP) in Spring 2018. The goals embedded in the EMP were used to create a more fluid, action oriented document in SIP. The SIP distilled the EMP goals into a series of objectives and action steps which are used to guide and prioritize the work of the District.

The EMP aligns with the District's mission, vision, and values, while also connecting to the Chancellor's Office Vision for Success. Student success is at the heart of the EMP and provides the outline for the Merced Community College District to thrive and be responsive to community need. The SIP provides the specific actions needed to accomplish the broad student success goals identified in both the EMP and the Vision for Success. These strategic planning documents provide Merced College with the focus necessary to continually evaluate and improve the student experience.

Further, the Educational Master Plan is the foundational plan for strategic alignment for the following plans for the District:

- **Technology Master Plan** - Five-year comprehensive plan highlighting technology priorities, standards, guidelines, and innovations.
- **Facilities Master Plan** - Ten-year comprehensive plan designed to provide direction for growth, modernization, and development of state-of-the-art educational facilities.
- **Staff Plan** - Five-year comprehensive staffing plan with succession planning and workforce forecasting for human resource needs.
- **Professional Development Plan** - Five-year comprehensive plan designed to develop and provide an operational blueprint for professional development and training needs for the Merced College workforce.

All of the aforementioned plans are either completed or in the final stages of development—leading Merced College into a very bright, innovative, and purposeful future to better serve our community.

### The Educational Master Plan is:

- ☑ A District roadmap
- ☑ Data-driven
- ☑ Student-centered
- ☑ Goal-oriented



### EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN

—  
SEPTEMBER 2017 -  
APRIL 2018



### STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

—  
APRIL 2018 -  
OCTOBER 2018



### FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

—  
AUGUST 2018 -  
MAY 2019

# MERCED COLLEGE

## EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLAN 2018-2023

### Five-Year Goals and Objectives



# 1

## EMPLOY ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS, PROGRESSION, AND COMPLETION / TRANSFER

1. Develop guided pathways within metamajors, including stacked credentials, and in connection with K-12 and university partners.
2. Strengthen scheduling to provide effective, efficient, student-centered course offerings, delivered through structured time blocks, that also maximize Full-time Equivalent Student generation.
3. Design and develop innovative programs and expand educational programming to meet workforce needs (especially in Agriculture, Industrial Technology, and Career and Technical Education).
4. Provide just-in-time and advanced technical training to meet workforce needs.
5. Expand coursework and certificate and degree programs at Los Banos Campus to align with area workforce needs.
6. Create innovative packaging and delivery of programs (e.g. cohort approaches; coordinated night, weekend, & summer programs; Fast Track; etc.) and expand distance education offerings.
7. Implement strategies to support student success, progression, and completion / goal attainment.

# 2

## INCREASE STUDENT ACCESS AND STREAMLINE ENTRY PROCESSES

1. Support student goal identification and development of individualized student education plans.
2. Streamline registration / matriculation processes.
3. Reach new populations of students (e.g. in outer areas of District; new growth communities; incumbent adult workforce; non-traditional; AB288; more high school students; incarcerated; etc.).
4. Create First-Year Experience program which integrates campus life, career counseling, educational planning, and student success strategies.

# 3

## MAXIMIZE FUTURE FINANCIAL STABILITY VIA DATA-DRIVEN, LONG-RANGE, INTEGRATED FISCAL PLANNING

1. Implement integrated, data-driven business practices and sustainable resource development and allocation.
2. Align resources with planning processes for long-range financial planning and fiscal management.
3. Further develop the Foundation with structure, friend-raising, and fundraising.
4. Develop proactive funding diversification via the Foundation, grants, and private sector partnerships.





## EMP GOALS

- ☑ ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT & STUDENT SUCCESS
- ☑ STUDENT ACCESS
- ☑ RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND ALLOCATION
- ☑ SAFETY AND FACILITIES PLANING
- ☑ PARTNERSHIPS
- ☑ INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SYSTEM DESIGN

### 4

#### STRENGTHEN CAMPUS SAFETY AND ALIGN FACILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY PLANNING WITH EDUCATIONAL MASTER PLANNING

1. Address campus safety issues across all campus locations.
2. Ensure facilities and technology planning supports long-range educational planning.
3. Proactively pursue facility and technology funding through both state and diversified funding sources (see also Goal #3).

### 5

#### STRENGTHEN EXISTING AND CREATE NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, EMPLOYERS, AND GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES TO SUPPORT EMP GOALS

1. Revitalize Program Advisory Committees.
2. Strengthen University partnerships.
3. Strengthen K-12 partnerships.
4. Partner with Employers, Foundations, Community groups and Government agencies (city, county, state).

### 6

#### INVEST IN IMPROVED INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS DESIGN

1. Strengthen integrated planning.
2. Automate processes and strengthen data access and use at various levels of the institution; employ technology effectively; provide training.
3. Refine Committee structure to support institutional goals, the Educational Master Plan, and student success.
4. Develop long-range staffing and professional development plans.

# CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

## Program Highlights



With record numbers of students attending colleges and universities throughout the country, a huge void has been created for highly-skilled trade jobs.

Wages and demand for these trade jobs are continuing to increase and Merced College is attempting to meet that demand with our Career Technical Education (CTE) programs. These fast-track programs can earn students certificates for lucrative careers in one to four semesters.

The College offers CTE training in areas such as Certified Nursing, Administrative Office Management, Welding Technology, Mechanical Design, Diesel Equipment Technology, Industrial Electrical Technician, Automotive Technology and more.

CTE has also continued to build its relationships with the local community and nationally. Some of those highlights include:

- There will be a total of 2,400 completed articulations with the local high schools by the end of the academic school year. It's a sharp rise from the usual average of 800.
- The Computer Science program presented its drone courses in Puerto Rico.
- One hundred percent of our Agriculture Program graduates obtained employment in their field within seven months of earning their degree, and nearly 50 percent of those accomplished it in the first three months.
- The Agriculture department hosted FFA events servicing 15 local high schools in our area as well as state FFA competitors. The largest event is our annual Field Day, where 1,400 high school students from around the state come to Merced College to compete in everything from welding to animal judging.

# STUDENT PROFILE



## Emanuel Conde

Emanuel Conde was looking to put his welding skills to the test. The Merced College student secured funding from a Bay Area small business to build them a 30-foot gooseneck trailer with a five-foot tilt bed from scratch.

It was an ambitious project, but under the watchful eye of Welding Professor Chad Russell, Conde was confident he could accomplish it.

The end result was a trailer capable of hauling 24,000 pounds, allowing the family-run business to easily relocate their equipment from one site to another.

"I really enjoyed it because everything is handmade, custom made, so I got to design it how I wanted," Conde said. "It's not like I can just go buy this. Almost everything we had to make ourselves. I've learned a lot.

"I'm pretty happy with the results. I can eventually show this to my family, that I built this in college and maybe inspire them to build something too."

# STUDENT PROFILE

Nicolas Ruano



Nicolas Ruano didn't set out to achieve anything special.

On a suggestion from his mother, the high school junior enrolled in a free Sociology class at Merced College during his freshman year at Buhach Colony. He enjoyed the experience more than he ever anticipated and happily came back for more over the next three years.

Taking full advantage of Merced College's dual-enrollment opportunities, Ruano is on pace to graduate from high school in 2020 with an associate degree in Psychology from Merced College.

"After I took my first Sociology class at Merced College, I talked to my high school counselor," Ruano said. "She was the one that said I could get my associate degree. So, ever since my freshman year, that was the goal."

"I've taken two to three classes a semester. I've had a few two-plus-two classes, which are classes taken at Buhach where you also receive college credit, but the bulk of them have either been taken at Merced College or online."

Ruano said that as nice as finishing high school with a college degree in hand is, the thing that's kept bringing him back was the variety of classes available.

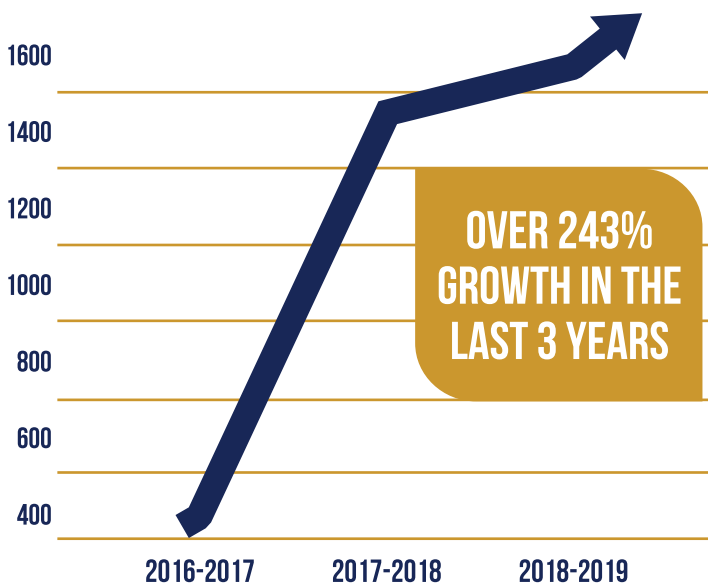
"There's a lot of college classes here that we don't get in high school, like a lot of the Psychology classes," Ruano said. "I get to really pick stuff I'm interested in and want to learn about. I was also able to replace some of my high school classes with more exciting options. I took all my English and History classes here and was able to get credit at the high school level."

While Ruano is proud of his academic accomplishments, he's equally pleased with helping ease the steadily-increasing cost of higher education for his parents. He'll enter his eventual four-year school as a junior, leaving just two years to pay for.

"My parents are definitely happy that we'll only need to pay for two years of school, and it's neat because I can just jump into my major and not have to worry about my GE classes that I took here," Ruano said. "I would recommend every high schooler do this. It's free right now, the only thing you pay for is textbooks."

"There's definitely more work, but I think it's doable. You learn a lot more and there's a lot of classes you get to take that would never be an option at the high school level."

## High School Dual Enrollment Growth



# OUTREACH

## Building Strong Partnerships

**55%** Over half of high school graduates in our service area chose to attend Merced College

High school students make up an important and substantial portion of incoming students to Merced College.

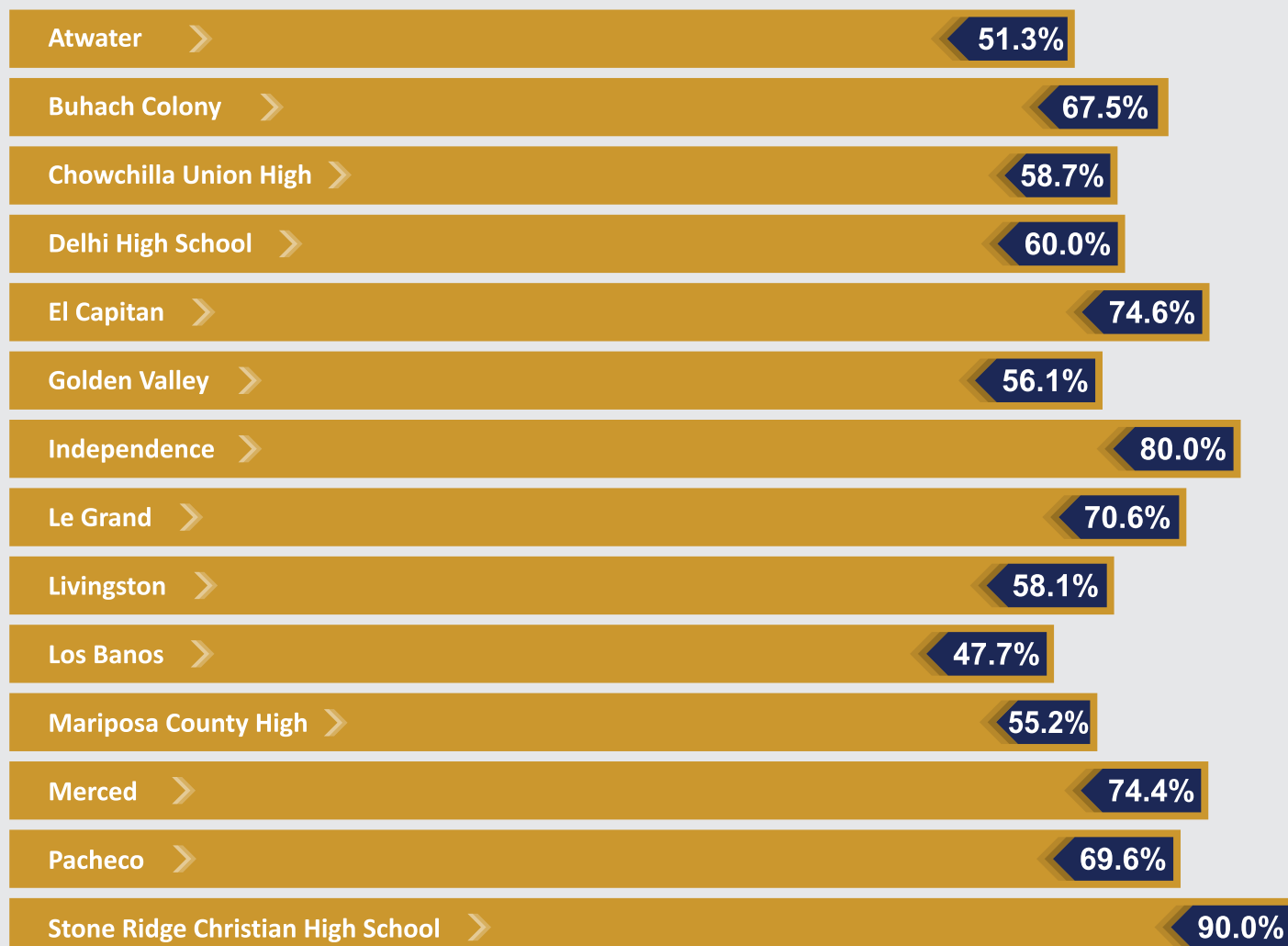
To this end, the Office of Relations with Schools (ORS) has built strong partnerships with the 16 high schools in Merced College's service area, as well as with six private, charter, and alternative schools in the area.

The ORS team consists of five high school liaisons (four in Merced, one in Los Banos), called Student Success and Support Program Technicians, and a Director. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the team:

- Held 211 high school events
- Hosted 37 tours
- Participated in 14 community outreach events
- Completed student planning for 3,292 new students

This year's Blue Devil Preview Days welcomed 824 high school seniors to the Merced and Los Banos campuses.

## Percentage of Area High School Applicants Enrolled in Fall 2018



# RAJ KAHLON



# Building our Flagship Agricultural Programs

Raj Kahlon has quietly become a pillar in the Merced community.

The owner of RHM Farms has steadily grown his family business and reputation over the last 20 years. During that time, Kahlon has earned praise from his peers for his business savvy and integrity.

Generosity can be added to his list of attributes.

Wishing to give back to the community in which he's thrived as a pistachio and almond farmer, Kahlon donated \$5-million to support the agricultural programs at Merced College and the future 20,000-square foot Agriculture and Industrial Technology Complex.

"I believe that Merced College is the foundation of the Merced community," Kahlon said. "They've had strong ties to local agriculture since the school opened and continue to educate the area's future agriculturists and leaders.

"It is the reason I entered this partnership. Helping to grow the workforce of Merced County is important to everyone. I want to be a part of that growth."

The partnership agreement, approved by the Merced College Board of Trustees in late March, between Kahlon and the Merced College Foundation will include developing approximately 100 acres of pistachios, which will generate additional funds for the College as well as provide an agricultural land lab for students to learn production and harvesting practices.

"This is the largest gift in Merced College history and the beginning of big things to come," Merced College Superintendent/President Chris Vitelli said. "I'm proud of the work done by the Merced College Foundation to help make this happen and grateful to Raj Kahlon for his investment in our students and agricultural programs.

"Throughout this process, Raj has expressed his desire to give back to the community who has given him so much. I couldn't be more appreciative of his incredible generosity and the long-term impact of this donation."

Kahlon's generosity helped make him the seventh recipient of the President's Medallion at the 2019 State of the College Address and Luncheon. The Merced College Board of Trustees took it one step further, unanimously agreeing to name the College's new Agriculture and Industrial Technology Building after Kahlon at their April board meeting.

The proposed building will consist of 20,000 square feet of classroom and laboratory space for programs in agribusiness, industrial technology, horticulture, HVAC, crop science and animal science. The added classrooms and labs will increase enrollment capacity by 2,248 weekly student contact hours, helping to keep pace with the 12-percent enrollment bump that the Chancellor's Office predicts from 2016-2022.

Executive Director of the Merced College Foundation, Jill Cunningham said this gift is near and dear to the school administration's heart. President Vitelli studied agriculture and was very active in the FFA, while Cunningham has deep roots in the Le Grand farming community.

"I'm a third generation Merced College family and I'm thrilled that this donation will propel the next generations to come," Cunningham said.



— Grow here. Go anywhere. —





# PREPARING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE AND MEETING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

## HISTORY

Merced College is preparing students for the ever growing workforce need of Merced County. Current programs are offered using buildings that were constructed between 1968 and 1976 and were designed for pedagogies and equipment of that time. Today, the agriculture and industrial communities have incorporated technological practices that require training that is vastly different than these earlier years. The occupational areas served are experiencing an increase in the use of new approaches including: computerized simulation and mapping, computer operating control systems, robotics, new electronics, and alternative fuel technologies. There is a significant difference in the facility requirements for these new technologies including: electrical systems, HVAC, lighting, noise control, internet connectivity, equipment, and station configuration. Licensing and certification requirements are also fueling program needs. More stringent rules and regulations to use, handle, and dispose of pesticides, chemicals, automotive fluids, electronic components, and industrial waste have increased the need to train and re-train individuals working in these related fields.



## Merced College provides degrees and/or certificates in a number of fields associated with Agriculture and Industrial Technology

- ✔ Agriculture Business
- ✔ Agriculture, General
- ✔ Animal Science
- ✔ Automotive
- ✔ Commercial Refrigeration
- ✔ Computer and Networking Technology
- ✔ Crop Science
- ✔ Diesel Equipment Technology
- ✔ Electronics and Electric Technology
- ✔ HVAC Technology
- ✔ Industrial Electronics
- ✔ Industrial Maintenance
- ✔ Instrumentation and Process Control
- ✔ Landscape Horticulture
- ✔ Mechanized Agriculture
- ✔ Welding Technology



# LOS BANOS CAMPUS

## Growth and Development

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The Los Banos Campus, a full-service educational center of Merced College, has continued to evolve its course offerings to better serve residents of the Westside of Merced County.

One of the newest additions to the curriculum is a fast-track Welding Program, which began in Fall 2018. Students were treated to a new welding lab loaded with state-of-the-art equipment, including 12 booths and a classroom space, located just a couple miles away from the main campus.

The Food Forest, a one-acre semicircle located on the east side of the campus, has seen a number of upgrades in the 2018-19 school year as well. The initial planting consisted of 20 different fruit trees and a variety of native plants. Volunteers, consisting of administrators, faculty, students and staff, have since added raised vegetable beds, a large amount of mulch and some replacement trees and bushes.

In an effort to meet the Merced Community College District's sustainability goals, Los Banos will also be adding solar panels on a covered parking area beginning in Fall 2019. The panels are scheduled to be operational as of January 2020, creating 436 kilowatts of power and an estimated first-year savings of \$108,267.

Los Banos Campus student enrollment in both credit and non-credit classes was 3,262 for 2017-2018.

# LOS BANOS CAMPUS FACILITIES MASTER PLAN



The Facilities Master Plan includes new construction of a Career Technical Education building and recommendations to expand the campus northward.

## 2019 FACILITIES MASTER PLAN - LOS BANOS CAMPUS

- EXISTING
- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- FUTURE (BEYOND FMP)

# HIGHLIGHTING INNOVATIONS

1

## Guided Pathways

The College began implementation of the California Guided Pathways Model in January of 2018. Guided Pathways is a system-wide change meant to improve student success while closing the gaps in equity. The model creates clear, easy-to-follow academic maps that give students their best chance of earning certificates and or degrees in a timely manner.

“We’re trying to simplify things for students and take the guess work out of earning a degree by creating these road maps.”

Dr. Lonita Cordova,  
Dean of Student Equity and Success

## 7 Schools

- Industry and Manufacturing
- Social Sciences and Education
- STEM
- Health and Public Safety
- Agriculture
- Arts, Humanities and Languages
- Business

2

## Branching Out

### Breaking Ground with Google Invite

Merced College Professor Kathleen Kanemoto was one of the 21 computer science faculty members invited to participate in Google’s second Faculty in Residence program over the summer. The faculty, whom serve underrepresented students from 20 institutions, were invited to spend four weeks in an immersive learning experience, working as a cohort at Google’s Mountain View headquarters. Kanemoto was the program’s first community college representative. The cohort explored hands-on, project based learning workshops and resources to augment their curriculum, discussed industry expectations, learned more about the technical interviewing process, and immersed themselves in Google’s engineering culture. The program provided faculty the time, space, and opportunity to collaborate with each other in the creation of learning materials that were applied in their classrooms when they return to campus.



3

## Prison Education Program



**636%**  
**PRISON PROGRAM  
ANNUAL GROWTH**  
**1,803 TOTAL  
STUDENTS SERVED**

Merced College has partnered with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to offer college course work to incarcerated students at Valley State Prison and the California Correctional Women’s Facility.

# STUDENT PROFILE

## Blake Brigham



For Blake Brigham, inspiration struck while attending a softball game.

His girlfriend's father tried to make his lawn chair work on a set of bleachers and inevitably fell over. Most would have just laughed at the scene, but it sparked Brigham's imagination.

"I'm always someone that looks at things and thinks how you can make it better," Brigham said. "After he fell, I started thinking there should be something that could easily convert from a stadium chair to a lawn chair and back. I thought it over for a couple days and then built a rough prototype in my backyard.

"It's a chair that you can use in the bleachers, but also has four folding legs, so you can convert it to a lawn chair."

Brigham believed he had a money-making idea and contacted Professor of Business, Entrepreneurship & Marketing Annette Haugen. Haugen was sold on the product and encouraged Brigham to enter an outdoor recreation product and service idea competition for college students from around the world called Outdoor Weber.

Brigham was named one of the 10 finalists and traveled to Ogden, Utah for the four-day competition. He is looking into patenting and producing his chair.

# COMMUNITY AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Mercy Medical Center Merced

## PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

**Merced College** offers everyone within the community their best opportunity to succeed. The College creates partnerships that connect us with businesses and industry to meet their workforce development needs. Merced College's workforce training programs include the flagship Customer Service Academy, serving hundreds of businesses over almost 20 years, with training in areas such as team building and communication in the workplace; and the Emerging Leaders Institute, which focuses on developing core leadership skills for new managers, high-potential employees and those employees seeking leadership skills for future career goals. Industry and regulatory classes are also offered such as Sexual Harassment, Notary, Serv Safe and BAR Smog Update Certification as well as customized curriculum in response to business and industry needs and unique work environments.

Merced College's Community Services/Education program provides opportunities for education, enrichment, and adventure with classes such as Aikido, Ceramics and Lap Swim. Through the ever-popular College for Kids program, hundreds of kids get their start on a college campus by spending their summers in fitness and enrichment classes.

## ADULT EDUCATION

The Adult Education & Noncredit Program, previously known as Continuing Education, offers close to 100 noncredit sections each semester at over 25 sites throughout Merced County and the surrounding area. Our noncredit courses are – as the title suggests – community college courses with no credit associated with them, which means free tuition to our students in topics such as Medical Assisting, Technical Office Occupations, GED Preparation, Basic Skills, ESL, Citizenship, Performing Arts, Mature Driver, Sewing, and many others. Students 18 and over who enroll in noncredit courses do not receive grades, can repeat the course as many times needed, and benefit from a stress-free environment. Be sure to look out for our Horizons Schedule of Classes to learn more about us and help us spread the word to our community.



# STUDENT LIFE

## ASMC Food Pantry

With food insecurity - a situation where consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources - a growing problem across the country and in Merced County, the Associated Students of Merced College (ASMC) passed a resolution for a hunger-free campus at the start of the Fall 2017 semester.

The establishment of the school's first Food Pantry shortly followed. The Merced College Food Pantry is located behind the gym in the yellow Sea-Train. The Pantry is open to students, faculty and staff four days a week. Stop by the ASMC Office, located at Student Union 107, or check the Merced College website for Pantry hours.

The Pantry operates on donations and offers free water, canned goods, dry meals, instant meals, cereal and basic toiletries like shampoo, floss and toothpaste to those in need.



**ASMC President Julius Sweet works in the Merced College Food Pantry**



## STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Like many students, Blanca Ceja-Salas came to Merced College with one dream, just to discover another.

The April Student of the month and Merced College Student of the Year has always loved animals and started at the College intending to study Animal Science. It was on the Merced campus where she discovered a new passion for photography. Cejas-Salas plans on combining her two loves and dreams of becoming an animal photographer for the San Diego Zoo.

Ceja-Salas is set to graduate in May with a 3.7 GPA and an AA in Photography. She already earned a certificate in Photography in Fall 2018 and has become so adept at it, a number of her photos were selected by the Art Department to be displayed in the Administration Building.

The sophomore's accomplishments are all the more impressive when considering that English is her third language. Ceja-Salas was born deaf in Mexico. Her family moved to Merced where she was raised speaking American Sign Language and Spanish. She began learning English when she started school and has relied on ASL interpreters throughout her life.

"She has proven to be a good role model for others students, especially our deaf and hard of hearing students," Disabled Students Program and Services Counselor Dr. Melody Molina said.

# STUDENT PROFILE

## Ayaka Nakashima



Few people know how close Ayaka Nakashima's record-breaking season came to never happening.

The Merced College sophomore guard was convinced she wasn't that good of a basketball player and told the Blue Devil coaching staff she intended to hang up her sneakers and just be a full-time student. Women's basketball coach Allen Huddleston is happy they were able to convince her otherwise.

Nakashima's 96 3-pointers set a school single-season record, shattering the previous mark of 74 set by Megan Karker in the 2002-03 season. She accomplished all that while also getting recognized as a state scholar athlete. Nakashima's play helped the Devils reach the California Community College Athletic Association state semifinals for the second straight season.

"We could see from the beginning that she was a hard worker," Huddleston said.

"She wanted to be good and has put in a ton of extra time in the gym. There's times we've had to make her take days off, that's how hard she works. The biggest part for her, was believing in her ability to get it done. Once the confidence began to grow, then the records started to fall.

"I think for us, it's an outstanding example of what some of our student athletes have done. As good a 3-point shooter as she is, she's a better student. So, that speaks volumes when your players understand student first and athlete second."

Nakashima's path to her record-breaking season had plenty of obstacles. College can be daunting enough for anyone. Imagine throwing in the time and dedication required to be a successful athlete, learning the nuances of American basketball and doing it while trying to learn another language and culture. It takes a special person to excel in all areas.

"When I was 15 years old, I came here to America to play basketball with my club team," Nakashima said. "I had a good experience and I was interested in studying abroad. Merced was cheap and had a basketball team, so I decided to come here.

"Last season it was difficult to communicate with my team and coaches because of my English. I didn't know how basketball was going to be here, but I've had a really great experience so far, and I learned we have a chance to be state champions."

The language barrier was so great a season ago that Nakashima and teammate Suzuna Shoji didn't understand that the team was playing for a state championship until after the title game was over.

A loving and supportive team and a full year in the U.S. has helped Nakashima find a comfort level in her sophomore campaign. Not coincidentally, her confidence with the language and confidence on the court have steadily grown hand in hand.

"I broke the school record, but I couldn't do it by myself," Nakashima said. "My teammates trust me and pass me the ball. When I miss several shots in a row, my teammates and coaches tell me to keep shooting. So, their encouragement helped me."

As quiet and unassuming as Nakashima is on the court, Huddleston said it was nice to see her enjoy her moment.

"Most of the time, the most we can get out of her is a little fist pump," Huddleston said. "She was so excited about the record, though. And then to get the chance to meet Megan, who had the record. It just touched her tremendously that Megan would come out and watch her play.

"Just shows that hard work does pay off."



# ARTS

## 9 Fine & Performing Arts Degrees and Certificates

Merced College offers degrees and certificate programs in the Fine and Performing Arts fields that support and encourage students in realizing their full potential in both their personal and academic pursuits. Students explore creative strategies and applications within the visual and performing arts fields that promote enhanced career development choices and problem-solving abilities.

Particular areas of study include Fine and Digital Arts, Music, Photography and Theater Arts. Students can study curricula, including design, drawing and painting, sculpture and ceramics, as well as printmaking and art history.

One of the arts' most exciting area of growth is in digital media, which includes instruction and career technical skills development in game design, animation, motion graphics, web design, graphic design, and the integration of digital audio and video components. Merced College will offer students the opportunity to complete an AA degree in Digital Arts for the first time in Fall 2019.



Photography by Jay Sousa

# ATHLETICS

Merced College offers a gender-balanced program of intercollegiate athletics with six male sports (football, water polo, basketball, baseball, swimming, and track) and six female sports (volleyball, water polo, basketball, softball, swimming, and track). The department stresses competitive participation, as well as academic achievement, citizenship values, and community involvement.

## Highlights from the 2018-2019 MC Athletics year:

- Women's volleyball under head coach Jessica Casey reached the NorCal round-one regional playoffs for the first time since 2002.
- Head football coach Bob Casey saw 16 of his 19 sophomores sign grant-in-aid scholarships to four-year schools across the country.
- Women's water polo made the NorCal regionals for the second year in a row under second-year head coach Billy Halpin.
- Men's water polo (head coach Scott McCall), advanced through the NorCal regional playoffs to the state final four, finishing fourth in California.
- CVC co-champion women's basketball reached the state final four for the second consecutive year, finishing third in the state. Head Coach Allen Huddleston was named state coach-of-the-year for the northern region for the second year running.
- For the second time, softball head coach Suzanne Burrola McGhee was honored by her peers as an Adjunct Professor of the Year.
- Nate Devine has begun his tenure as head baseball coach, as Chris Pedretti stepped aside at the end of the 2018 season. Pedretti led his Blue Devil teams to 840 career wins, the highest total of any Merced College coach in any sport, a number unlikely ever to be surpassed.
- The college charged VPSS Dr. Michael McCandless to empanel a task force for studying the feasibility of adding men's and women's soccer to the MC program offerings.
- Cal-Pass data charting student success metric show that Merced College athletes continue to matriculate at a higher rate than the general student body.



# MC FOUNDATION

For over 46 years the Merced College Foundation has been the beneficiary of many annuities, real estate and stock transactions, and trusts from generous donors. This year not only did we receive the largest gift in Merced College history, we also launched an

“Employee Giving Campaign” to show our over 800 employees that together we can be a part of something bigger than ourselves. I am proud to say that this campaign has resulted in nearly half of our employees contributing part of their paychecks every month to further our mission. What this says is that Merced College is more than just where we work, it’s who we are and what we believe in.

No matter how your gift is made, we recognize that it is not just a check or shares of stock or a charitable trust; it is a statement, a promise, a commitment of support to our students, our college and our community. Now more than ever, Community Colleges are playing a

critical role in higher education. A degree or a skill-based certificate has the power to transform a life, particularly for those who do not have the resources or support necessary to make higher education attainable.

There is no question that the Merced College experience could not exist without the support of our engaged and generous donors. And while the Foundation staff recognizes this, I think it’s important to understand that our students do as well. One student, Jaryn Giampaoli, says that donors are “like a little band of people” pushing him to succeed. If you are not already a supporter of Merced College, I invite you to become one now. Your gift will be celebrated everyday on campus as students take steps towards success!

Sincerely,



**Jill Cunningham**  
**Associate Vice President of External Relations**  
**Executive Director of Merced College Foundation**

*The Merced College Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 incorporated, tax-exempt non-profit overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors. Our tax ID number is 23-7385578.*

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# MERCED COLLEGE



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