



The 411 on 274

April 2025

Winning Newsletter Name & New Members

Shoutout to **Andraya Gutierrez** for her winning submission for the newsletter name, “**The 411 on 274**”! Thank you Andraya

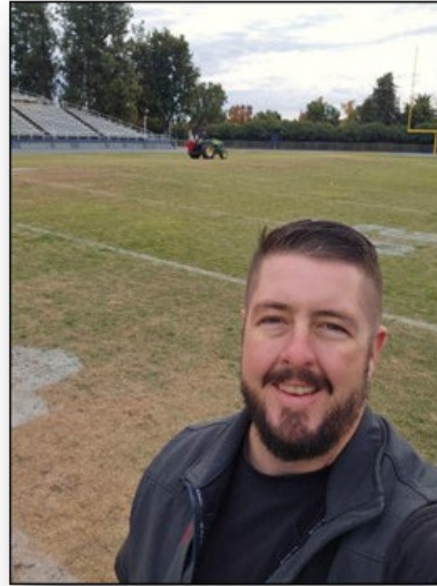
I'd also like to welcome our two newest chapter 274 members!

Arleth Williamson – A&R Technician
&
Ryan Villareal – Art Gallery Coordinator

Message from Your Chapter 274 President, Dustin Mason

Spring has arrived! I encourage everyone to step out and take a look at our beautiful campus. I want to make a special shout out to our classified professionals for their hard work and dedication to our campus. You all work hard every day to make our campus what it is today. CSEA is made up of nearly 800 chapters and 250,000 members. It's amazing to be a part of such a powerful organization.

I have noticed an increase of members attending out last few chapter meetings. It is great to see new faces at these meetings. Our meetings are not only a place for information and support (and don't forget FREE LUNCH!) but also, it's a great place to get to know other chapter members, socialize, and share ideas. **Vice President Issac Mock** and I hope to see you all at our next chapter meeting. Let's keep building our chapter and make it stronger than ever!



Member Spotlight

For this month's member spotlight please allow me to introduce **Margaret "Margo" Pulido** from our LB campus and her beautiful family!



1. Tell us a bit about yourself! What's your role in the union, and how long have you been a member?

I am the Administrative Coordinator for Dr. Jessica Moran and the Los Banos Campus and have

been a member of the union since 2013. I attend CSEA meetings, participate/volunteer for events when possible and am part of the New Employee Orientation (NEO) committee.

2. What inspired you to join the union, and what keeps you involved?

In the beginning I wasn't sure what it was about, but it sounded good. Now I am confident that I made the right choice to join. What keeps me involved is not just the benefits but the friends I have made over the years while volunteering for CSEA events. It's a wonderful community and we always have a good time.

3. What's one thing you're most proud of achieving—either at work, with the union, or in your personal life?

My success is having kids (2 sons & a daughter) that still want to hang out with me after they are grown up and out of the house. I love that! We go on trips and concerts and have the best time together. It makes it all worth it. Oh and I love being a grandma to a 2 year old toddler, it's a wonderful blessing... she's my joy and I am her Amma (ah-mah).

4. How has being part of the union impacted your career or life?

We've had a lot of fun over the years, I feel included and heard and I'm grateful for the increase in pay as well as our Cadillac insurance benefits. It's been nice. I appreciate how hard our CSEA leadership and negotiators work for us!

5. What's a fun fact about you that most people in the union might not know?

I used to be too scared to fly but in 2017 my dearest aunt was dying and I flew to her to say goodbye... it really hit me! I realized that life is fleeting and it's ok to be scared but I don't allow that to stop me anymore... So I started traveling and I've been on at least 2 trips a year since then. This year we're going to Thailand!

6. What do you enjoy doing outside of work to unwind or spend your free time?

I love to travel to Maui and New Jersey/New York (to visit my family)... but on a day to day, I like to sit on my big comfy couch and veg out on some K-drama for a little bit after work... a little escapism. Lol, Lately I've been researching Notary education and business since it's my side hustle that I'm finally getting started.... and of course, every chance I get, I visit my grandbaby. Soon, I'll be going to the MC Plant Sale to get some plants to re-start my small veggie garden.

7. If you could give one piece of advice to new union members, what would it be?

Be involved, stay connected, participate in events and ask questions in meetings... Smile... it's free. Lol

8. Is there a cause or issue you're passionate about that you'd like to share with other members?

Just some thoughts... I'm grateful for the life I live, when faced with life challenges, I contemplate all of my blessings and that helps me keep things in perspective. Love my God, my family, and appreciate working here... I have the best Dean/Leadership and work with some amazing, kind, and caring folks. That's my 411 on 274. Lol Thanks for including me in the member spotlight!!

Step Up as a Union Steward for Chapter 274!

Want to champion your coworkers and strengthen our union? Chapter 274 needs Union Stewards to fight for your workplace rights at Merced College. Right now we've just got one—far too few to represent our members! Step up today—training provided!

What You'll Do:

- Educate employees about their contract rights.
- Investigate and present grievances to management.
- Relay member concerns to our Negotiating Team.
- Attend CSEA's annual training sessions.
- Collaborate with our Chief Union Steward on grievance resolutions.

Who Can Apply?

Active members in good standing qualify. No experience required—just bring your passion and willingness to learn. This role opens the door to future leadership, like Chief Union Steward.

Why Join?

- Empower your peers and improve our workplace.
- Build leadership skills with CSEA training.
- Shape our Chapter's future.

Please reach out to me at michael.lara@mccd.edu if you're interested!

Steward's Corner: Navigating Tough Talks with Confidence

Welcome to the *Steward's Corner*, a new section in our newsletter where we share practical tips and strategies for handling workplace situations professionally and effectively. This month, we're focusing on how to discuss complex leave requests with your manager—especially when time is tight, and you're waiting on a response. Below is a sample scenario to guide you through the process, from start to finish.

Scenario: Requesting Vacation Time ([Article 20 – Vacation Scheduling](#))

March 26th

Member: "Hi, I'd like to take a two-week vacation from September 16th to 27th to join friends on a cruise. We need to confirm with them by April 4th. Would this work with the schedule? I'll submit the leave request if it does. I don't have enough hours yet, but I'll accrue them over the next two months."

Manager: "Let me check the schedule and get back to you."

Member: "Thanks! I'll send a quick email to recap our talk for the record."

Action: Member emails the manager summarizing the discussion.

April 2nd (No response yet)

Member (Email Reply): "Hi, just a friendly reminder that you were checking the schedule for my September 16th – 27th vacation request. We need to let our friends know by Friday, or we'll miss out. Thanks for your help!"

April 3rd

Manager (Email Reply): "Yes, you're approved. Go ahead and submit the leave request with your current hours, then add the extra days as you accrue them."

Upcoming Events

- **Next Chapter Meeting – Save the Date**

Date: April 16th, 2025

Details: Our next chapter meeting is April 16th!

- **Member Intern Program**

Date: April 18th, 2025

Details: Applications are due by April 18 for the Fall 2025 program. Work as an intern with a CSEA Labor Relations Representative—an excellent opportunity for members in good standing to develop skills and support our union. Apply here: [Member Intern Program | California School Employees Association](#)

- **Annual Plant Sale**

Date: April 19th – 20th, 2025

Details: Merced College is excited to welcome 40 shoppers at a time for half-hour time slots during the annual plant sale, which is by appointment only. Secure your spot by registering at the link below. The sale runs from 8am to 5pm on Friday, April 19th, and Saturday, April

20th. Follow the event on the Merced College Agriculture Page on Facebook. [Annual Plant Sale - Merced College](#)

- **Classified School Employee Week (CSEW) 2025**

Date: May 18th – 24th, 2025

Details: Celebrate classified employees with our annual breakfast and BBQ. Event details are still being planned. Volunteers needed—contact Angelica Campos (campos.a@mccd.edu) or Maria Soto (soto.m@mccd.edu).



Any shoutouts, anniversaries, membership growth, contract wins, training completions, retirements, event successes, or other wins we should celebrate? Please reach out to me at michael.lara@mccd.edu

CSEA Chapter 274

Our mission | To improve the lives of our members, students and community.

Want to share your thoughts, join a committee, or connect with fellow members? Your Chapter 274 team is here to support you—reach out to me at michael.lara@mccd.edu!

<https://csea.com/chapters/274>

