

DVC

DIABLO VALLEY COLLEGE

WINTER/SPRING 2025 • VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 2

BUILDING YOUR FUTURE

DVC LAYS THE FOUNDATION
FOR CAREERS IN THE
TRADES AND BEYOND

75 YEARS OF SUCCESS

HOW DVC TRANSFORMED
THE LIVES OF ALUMNI
ACROSS GENERATIONS

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GET A HEAD START
ON AN ENGINEERING CAREER
WITH CCAP STEM CREDITS**

**EMPOWERING PRIDE
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- 1 Apply for admission and financial aid
- 2 Complete the online orientation
- 3 Determine your placement in English/ESL and math
- 4 Complete an educational plan
- 5 Register for classes

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Building Your Future

DVC Lays the Foundation for Careers in the Trades and Beyond



Cecilia Brito Bernal

Cecilia Brito Bernal wanted to pursue a major that involved hands-on training. She enrolled at UC Davis to study electrical engineering, but felt the program wasn't what she was looking for.

"I began exploring options and chose to obtain an associate in science in electrical and electronics technology at DVC. I wanted to be the first woman in my family to enter the field," said Brito Bernal.

Brito Bernal is aware there has been increased interest in careers in skilled trades – occupations that often involve hands-on work involving a particular skill set, knowledge or ability.

"Younger students may find that they enjoy learning through hands-on training and experience. Also, committing to a four-year degree program may be difficult for some students," said Brito Bernal.

Brito Bernal is a first-generation college student, which made it a bit more challenging to get started on her educational path.

"DVC helped me recognize I belonged in this field. There were times I doubted my decision but now I'm motivated to go above

and beyond. DVC encourages you to push yourself. I had a fantastic experience and am grateful for all of the help. I am confident in my preparation and ready because of DVC," said Brito Bernal.

A Renewed Interest in the Trades

"While there is still interest in technology-related fields, more and more students recognize this doesn't exclude work in the skilled trades. In fact, this may be a key driver," said Shawn Kammerer, Assistant Professor of Construction Management and Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Program Coordinator at DVC.

Kammerer says that primarily software-driven jobs will be more heavily impacted by artificial intelligence, whereas advancements in construction and related industries will never replace the need for skilled trades workers.

"This means that job security is shifting away from purely software-related jobs, and moving toward hands-on careers," said Kammerer.

Daniel Vigil was in the U.S. Navy, developing skills in the construction trades before coming to DVC.

"I was part of the United States Naval Construction Battalions and was stationed in San Diego, where my job site was the public works of the area's

naval bases. I worked with a group of civilian construction managers," said Daniel Vigil.

His work with the U.S. Navy inspired him to pursue an associate in science degree in construction management at DVC.

"I think that there is an increased interest in a career in the trades due to the money, because once you become a journeyman, the pay is very enticing. Also, the work you do is everywhere. Construction is always

happening and there is always a need for skilled workers," said Vigil.

Vigil encourages students to pursue higher education, especially at DVC, where the cost is much lower than four-year institutions.

"My time at DVC is a good investment of my time because all the things that I have learned can be applied to many different industries," said Vigil.

Kammerer reports strong outcomes for students graduating from DVC's construction and pre-apprenticeship programs. Partnerships with piping trade unions UA Local 342 and UA Local 159 have resulted in many DVC pre-apprenticeship students joining one of their apprenticeship programs.

"We also partner with Habitat for Humanity, and some of our students have been hired after they complete the program. And this semester, we've been working with FORMA Construction and Roof and Realm," said Kammerer.

No Bachelor's Degree? No Problem

"Until recently, students sometimes resisted getting into the trades, as there had been a push for every student to get a four-year bachelor's degree. Many students have grown impatient with the lack of job opportunities



Daniel Vigil

they see for graduates who have accumulated breathtaking amounts of debt," said Dr. Jeffrey Smith, Department Chair, Industrial Design & Advanced Manufacturing at DVC.

By attending DVC, students have the advantage of acquiring the skills, knowledge, and hands-on learning experience to pursue a trade occupation while also earning transferable college credits that can be applied to a bachelor's degree. In fact, the support and connections available through DVC faculty and student services can help students to be even more successful.

Smith feels the reality is that many students want hands-on jobs where they can see a direct correlation between their work and the goods being produced, and these kinds of jobs can be obtained with a certificate or associate degree from DVC.

"We now see traditional engineers seeking work as technicians servicing high-tech equipment or programming robotics manufacturing equipment, as these jobs can be very well-paying," said Smith.

Employers Choose DVC for Skills Training

DVC has embraced a new cohort model for certain programs that not only support students interested in getting into the workforce, but that also supports employers enrolling their employees for upskilling opportunities.

"Having employers enroll their new employees into DVC's Industrial Automation and Robotics classes has changed the educational landscape. Seeing local high school graduates getting paid to take classes at DVC by their employers, often with jobs that provide full medical benefits, is truly impressive," said Smith.

Smith reports that several employers have partnered with DVC, including C&H Sugar, Autodesk, PepsiCo, Tesla, and Benchmark Electronics.

"We have a huge training gap facing American manufacturing. Employers are calling out for educational institutions to develop today's mechanics, machinists, model makers, and more. We need these folks now," said Greg King, Engineering Manager with Benchmark Electronics.

King says manufacturers need students to begin their training in the trades while in high school,



Diego Becerra

enabling those skills to be refined at community colleges like DVC, or on the job through an apprenticeship program.

King first got to know DVC as a student, studying engineering. After transferring to earn his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and gaining industry experience, he came back to DVC to upskill.

"I earned an associate in science in small business management, while also completing some engineering technology courses. During that time, I collaborated with Jeffrey Smith on developing design challenges for engineering technology students. Since then, I've posted job openings with Benchmark, participated in DVC career fairs, given tours of Benchmark's manufacturing facility, and more," said King.

Long-Term Career Growth and Opportunity

When exploring careers in the trades, students are often impressed with both the available wages and strength of the job market.

"In DVC's electrical and electronics technology program, we have strong success outcomes, with over 85% of our graduates securing related employment or apprenticeships," said Manual Covarrubias, Assistant Professor and Area Lead for the Electricity/Electronics and Energy Systems Programs.

Covarrubias is proud of the industry partnerships DVC has cultivated. He says Tesla, UPS, BART, NextEra Energy, Varian, and Siemens choose DVC for training and employee recruitment due to the college's state-of-the-art tools, equipment, relevant facilities, and industry-experienced instructors.

"Employers say DVC students arrive ready to contribute from day one. They see the significant growth in the students' capabilities, and really value the technical skills our students possess," said Covarrubias.

Fast Track to Employment

Diego Becerra earned an associate in science in electrical and electronics technology from DVC in August 2024. He credits the program for helping him transition into a youth worker position with the City of Richmond electric shop as a field technician.

"As it was my first field job, I did not expect the work to be so similar to what I had been taught. I realized

Why Choose a Career in the Trades?

- Job Demand and Stability
- High Earnings Potential Without High Student Debt
- Hands-On Learning and Practical Experience
- Career Satisfaction
- Opportunities for Entrepreneurship
- Better Work-Life Balance

Train for the Trades at DVC!

If you enjoy hands-on learning and want to get on the fast-track to a well-paying career, consider training for a trade occupation at DVC!

- Construction
- Electrical and Electronics Technology
- Engineering Technology
- HVACR (Apprenticeship – Selective Admissions)
- Industrial Design
- Plumbing (Apprenticeship – Selective Admissions)
- Pre-Apprenticeship
- Steamfitting (Apprenticeship – Selective Admissions)

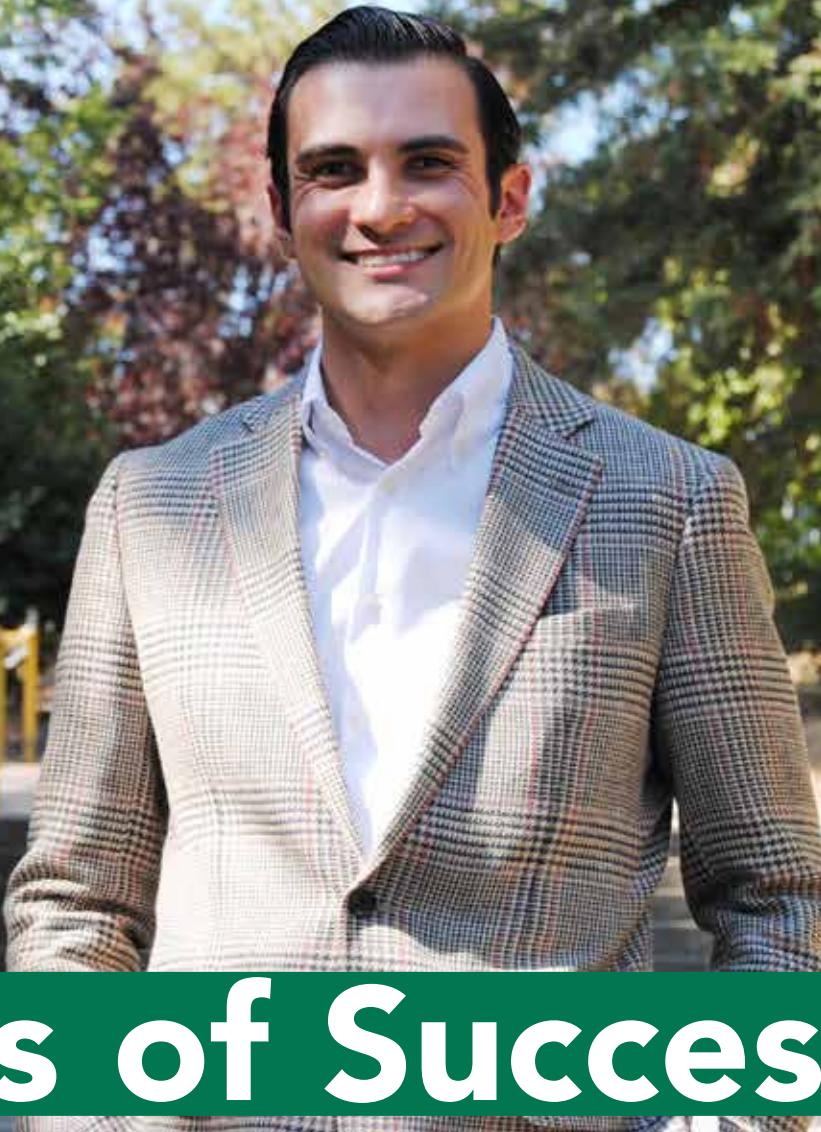
how well DVC had set me up for success," said Becerra.

Becerra strongly encourages students curious about trade occupations to consider enrolling at DVC.

"I really feel that my education at DVC was valuable. I was able to build relationships and make connections that led to apprenticeships and multiple job opportunities upon graduation," said Becerra.

For more information about skilled trades training at DVC, visit:

- > www.dvc.edu/construction
- > www.dvc.edu/electrical
- > www.dvc.edu/engineering-technology
- > www.dvc.edu/pre-apprenticeship



75 Years of Success

How DVC Transformed the Lives of Alumni Across Generations

“DVC has had a profound impact on my life. In fact, DVC has been instrumental in the lives of so many of my close friends and family,” said DVC alum Brandon Brookshire.

Brookshire joined the United States Air Force after graduating from high school. After his enlistment ended, he enrolled at DVC, using the education benefits awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Brookshire received his associate in arts for transfer in economics, and completed his bachelor’s degree at Cal State East Bay. He continued on, receiving an MS in quantitative economics and is now pursuing an MBA while working as a Relationship Credit Manager at Heritage Bank of Commerce.

“My experience at DVC enabled me to foster a strong network in the Mt. Diablo Region. I have nothing but unbridled optimism regarding the future success of this institution, and I look forward to another 75 years,” said Brookshire.

A Catalyst for Transformation

Jessie Badley overcame numerous barriers to get to where she is today and was proud to share her story with the DVC Alumni Association.

“My mother spent much of my life in and out of prison, resulting in me growing up in and out of foster care,” said Badley.

Badley attended 11 schools throughout her childhood. After turning 18, she discovered her passion for cooking and enrolled in DVC’s culinary arts program, earning multiple certificates.

“My time at DVC was transformative, as it was my first truly positive educational experience,” said Badley.

Badley worked in pastry for nine years, but was disappointed after her

requests for a raise were denied. She returned to DVC to transition to a new career.

“While taking prerequisites for the dental hygiene program, I encountered Professor Dan Seth



Photo courtesy of Charley Daly



Douglas Phenix

in my human anatomy class. He left a lasting impression on me, encouraging me to aim higher academically," said Badley.

Badley chose to pursue a career in chemistry, transferring to UC Davis for her bachelor's degree in biochemistry. Today, she is a rising candidate for her PhD in pharmacology and toxicology.

"DVC was the catalyst for my transformation. Without DVC, I wouldn't be where I am today, immersed in academia, eager to learn, and grateful for the opportunities I've been afforded," said Badley.

From Humble Beginnings to a Premier Institution

Diablo Valley College traces its beginnings to 1949, when it launched as East Contra Costa Junior College. The college was created to serve WWII veterans returning home, eventually moving to its present Pleasant Hill location in 1952 and adopting the name Diablo Valley College in 1958.

The college expanded to a second location in San Ramon, and now serves nearly 25,000 students annually. DVC is known as one of the most reliable transfer institutions within the state of California, but the college has numerous other achievements.

"Most people don't know how many programs we have to help people get up and running quickly to upskill or enter the workforce,"

said Jim Blair, Director of College Advancement at DVC.

DVC Changes Lives

Blair has heard many stories about DVC's impact across the Bay Area and beyond.

"Mention DVC at any meeting you attend in the area, and someone will have had a life-changing story to tell about their own experience here or know someone who did," said Blair.

Douglas Phenix can count himself amongst those storytellers.

"Before arriving at DVC, I had dropped out of two community colleges and had been on academic probation. I ended up working at a grocery store, and was in a place of uncertainty, with a lack of passion and vision. My god-sister was attending DVC at the time, so I decided to enroll," said Phenix.

Phenix credits DVC for helping him discover his love for higher education.

"I worked in the Student Life office as well as EOPS. I got to see firsthand the power of community and support given to students. It was truly the 'community' of community college," said Phenix.

Although Phenix earned a certificate in graphic design at DVC, he discovered a new career goal that resulted from his overall student experience, culminating in his decision to work in higher education as a counselor.

Continued on page 10

From DVC Student to District Chancellor

Did you know that the Chancellor of the Contra Costa Community College District is a DVC alum? It's true!

Chancellor Mojdeh Mehdizadeh immigrated from Iran as a child, initially settling in Ogden, Utah with her family. They moved to Pleasant Hill a year later. She enrolled at DVC in 1987, and also worked in student jobs on campus. She transferred to San Francisco State University, earning a bachelor's degree in computer science, and then a master's degree in speech communications at Cal State East Bay. She continued working at DVC in various roles, and then began working for the district in 1998, later becoming the President of Contra Costa College.

"My entire career being here, and then ultimately serving as a chancellor for the entire district, is beyond a dream," said Mehdizadeh.

Source: Tori Pearson, Staff Writer – The DVC Inquirer: www.dvcinquirer.com/af/2024/09/24/from-child-of-iran-to-community-college-chancellor-a-dvc-story/



Photo courtesy of Toni Pearson

DVC Fast Facts

Over one and a half million students have attended DVC in the last 75 years, enabling them to forge remarkable career paths in 87 different fields. Some notable accolades:

» DVC is ranked #1 among the 28 Bay Area community colleges for transfer to in-state private or out of state colleges.

» DVC is ranked #3 in the state, among 116 community colleges, for local transfers to the UC system in Fall 2023.

» DVC is ranked #3 in the state for the percentage of transfer-intending students who transferred within four years.

Sources: UC Data Warehouse, CCCO Datamart and State Auditor's Transfer Report



Your Teen Can Get a Head Start

on an Engineering Career with CCAP STEM Credits

“When I was a kid, I was in a program that taught block coding from scratch. It opened my eyes to the world of engineering. In eighth grade, I saw a presentation about the CCAP-STEM Academy and how it can help kids that want to go to college for engineering. I immediately signed up,” said Gerardo Garcia, a DVC student interested in a career in mechanical engineering.

The College and Career Access Pathway for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (CCAP-STEM) Academy is a dual enrollment partnership between Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) and DVC, based at Ygnacio Valley High School. Students focused on entering an engineering pathway

are able to earn college credits from DVC while in high school.

While acknowledging that the classes were challenging, Garcia really enjoyed his experience.

“It was really fun because I was part of a community of students who were passionate about engineering just like me. It was almost like a second family at school,” said Garcia.

CCAP-STEM Academy students take at least one college course per semester during all four years of high school.

“They start with College & Career Readiness courses and continue with a mix of hands-on and academic-focused courses. By the time they graduate high school, students in this program complete at least 12 units of college coursework that can be applied to a Certificate or Associate degree at DVC, used for transfer to a 4-year university, or can be directly applied to a career in this field,” said Sarah Peterson, Manager of Early College Credit at DVC.

Students can also enroll in optional summer career academies as well as an internship that earns work experience credits at DVC.

“I participated in everything I could, including the summer career academies. I also interned at two civil engineering firms,” said Garcia.

Garcia enrolled in additional DVC classes beyond what was required for the CCAP-STEM program, further propelling him towards his future in mechanical engineering. Upon graduating from high school, he enrolled at DVC full-time. He plans to earn his associate in science in mechanical engineering, and then transfer to pursue a bachelor’s degree.

“I accumulated 26 college credits just from the CCAP-STEM Academy, plus the additional credits I earned from other DVC classes I completed while in high school. I’m so grateful for the opportunities I’ve had through the program,” said Garcia.

Garcia’s mother, Cristina Jacobo, encourages parents to enroll their teens in the CCAP-STEM program,

or other dual enrollment programs that earn college credits. She says it will help them plan for their future.

“The CCAP program helped Gerardo to prepare for his entry to college. His father and I are so proud of him, and we look to him as an example for his brother Omar. Gerardo has shown so much dedication to his studies and his future career in engineering,” said Jacobo.

How Does the CCAP-STEM Academy Work?

“The CCAP-STEM Academy is open to all MDUSD students interested in enrolling in college courses while in high school. The classes are held on campus at Ygnacio Valley High School, and then as students work towards graduation, they attend classes at DVC’s Pleasant Hill campus,” said Hilary Shen, Program Coordinator for the CCAP-STEM Academy at Ygnacio Valley High School.

Parents interested in enrolling their students into the program can reach

out to Shen at hshen@dvc.edu, or they can connect with their child's school counselor.

CCAP-STEM Academy Classes

Students participating in the CCAP-STEM Academy are able to enroll in several dual enrollment classes during their time in high school. Available classes include:

- College and Career Readiness I
- College and Career Readiness II
- Introduction to Technical Drawing
- Mathematics for Technicians
- Machining and Manufacturing I
- Machining and Manufacturing II
- Introduction to Programming
- Technology and Society
- Optional: Summer Career Academies at DVC
- Optional: Internship

Tuition and books are free for program participants. Students also receive a range of supports, including academic counseling, tutoring, work-based learning opportunities, skill development, and exposure to industry.

"Students in this program have an opportunity to graduate with up to 28 units of college credits from DVC – all transferrable to CSU and/or UC campuses – with no tuition or book fees. In addition, students can enroll in one of DVC's summer career academies, participate in a work experience internship, or select from other DVC classes through the regular summer schedule," said Shen.

Peterson encourages parents to help their children understand the benefits of programs that enable them to earn college credits while in high school.

"The CCAP-STEM Academy is just one of the amazing dual enrollment opportunities that DVC offers for local high school students to earn college credit! We currently offer CCAP programs with three high school districts and one charter school and are planning to expand to additional districts in 2025-2026. We also offer high school articulation and concurrent enrollment programs serving over 3000 students annually," said Peterson.

Get Started Early on Your STEM Career

Adriel Malapote enrolled in the CCAP-STEM Academy to earn college credits while in high school.

"Before hearing about the academy, I didn't even know that dual enrollment existed, or that advanced classes were an option for me. The STEM side of the program really opened my eyes to what was possible. It was a good challenge, and pushed me out of my comfort zone," said Malapote.

Like Garcia, Malapote enjoyed participating in the summer career academies and internships.

"The summer career academies were fun and enabled me to learn new skills like laser cutting and computer aided design (CAD), and introduced me to computer numeric control (CNC) machines," said Malapote.

Malapote interned with the Advanced Mobility Group.

"During my internship, I was exposed to different aspects of civil engineering. I learned how stoplights operate, and how the timing of lights and road design affects the overall driving experience," said Malapote.

In 2024, the first cohort of CCAP-STEM Academy students graduated from the program.

Why Enroll in the CCAP-STEM Program?

- Earn transferrable college credits while still in high school
- Free tuition and books
- Access to academic counseling and tutoring
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Exposure to industry, with internship opportunities

"We had several graduating seniors who earned college credits through the CCAP-STEM Academy. Seventeen students earned 12 or more college credits, with most earning 18 or more credits," said Shen.

The overwhelming majority of academy graduates are continuing their education, with most pursuing a career within a STEM field.

"I completed the CCAP-STEM Academy as part of cohort 1 and earned 25 college credits through the program. After graduation, I enrolled at DVC as a full-time student and I'm also serving as a teaching assistant for an Introduction to CNC class. I would like to explore career opportunities in engineering and machining," said Malapote.

Malapote highly recommends that students consider participating in the CCAP-STEM Academy.

"The program prepares you for the workload of college and helps reduce the number of STEM classes you need to take later in college. It also provides a solid foundation for entering STEM fields. You finish faster, and save on tuition costs," said Malapote.

To learn more about opportunities for earning college credit while in high school, visit:

- www.dvc.edu/ccap-stem
- www.dvc.edu/hs-programs



Adriel Malapote



Empowering Pride and Belonging

Evelin Suarez Martinez

DVC's New Inclusivity and Wellness Center Transforms Student Lives

When Evelin Suarez Martinez wanted to apply to colleges in her senior year of high school, she didn't know if it would be possible.

"As an undocumented student, I thought I might not be able to enroll in post-secondary institutions. But through my mentor, Herman Soto Acevedo, I learned college and financial aid were possible for me," said Suarez Martinez.

Suarez Martinez chose to attend DVC, and also joined the Puente Learning Community.

"As a first-generation undocumented Latina, I was terrified because I didn't have anyone close

to me who had attended college, but I decided to give it a try," said Suarez Martinez.

Suarez Martinez credits the support she received from the DVC DREAMers Alliance and the Puente program for helping her feel more comfortable, confident, and like she belonged at DVC.

"During my first semester, I didn't know anyone who was undocumented, and I was scared to share my status. Receiving information and resources from the DREAMers Alliance and attending Puente classes taught by teachers who looked like me made me more interested in school," said Suarez Martinez.

During her time at DVC, Suarez Martinez made numerous connections with students

with shared backgrounds and experiences. She also developed a passion for helping students, volunteering for the DREAMers Alliance and serving as a peer counselor for the Puente Program while receiving stipends each semester from the Dream Act Service Grant.

"After earning my associate in arts in sociology from DVC, I plan to transfer to obtain a bachelor's degree in Chicano Studies," said Suarez Martinez.

While the support system for undocumented students in higher education is still in its beginning stages, DVC is making important inroads.

"The DVC DREAMers Alliance volunteers work year-round to create a safe and secure environment

for undocumented students. The alliance hosts events that build community and create a support system for DREAMers," said Juan Huerta Villicana, Volunteer Tri-Chair for the DREAMers Alliance and Department Chair for the Early Childhood Education Program at DVC.

Get Involved

"I joined the Associated Students of Diablo Valley College (ASDVC). Collaborating on projects and helping host events enabled me to meet a lot of students and make meaningful connections," said Helena Suarez-Kaminska.

Suarez-Kaminska applied to four-year universities as a high school senior but was disappointed to not be accepted to her top choices, and

to not be awarded enough financial aid to attend at that time.

"My sister inspired me to go to community college because she started at community college and then got into her dream school, so I looked into DVC. I'm now majoring in environmental science, and plan to transfer to earn my bachelor's degree," said Suarez-Kaminska.

Suarez-Kaminska found the more involved she became on campus, the more meaningful it was to see the progress she had made from her first year, and the more connected she felt within the DVC community.

"I have met students that have fallen behind in certain subjects or were overwhelmed with the college workload. It's important to reach out in those moments to either professors or tutoring centers. What has made a significant difference for me as well as some of my peers is trying to be involved with DVC events and activities," said Suarez-Kaminska.

Her Second Home

"There are many times I have felt left out of society, especially because of my legal status, but I had to get out of my comfort zone to find places where I belong," said Glenda Navarro, an allied health major at DVC who plans to become a pediatric nurse.

Navarro recommends all students join at least one club, and notes that DVC makes it "almost impossible" to not join a club or program, given the numerous flyers on campus and links on the DVC website.

"As students and adults, we have to advocate for ourselves to find a place that we can call our second home," said Navarro.

Navarro really enjoys the Puente program. She feels welcomed and supported and has made many friends.

"A quote we use is 'Tu eres mi otro yo,' which means 'you are my other self.' Puente has taught me so much more than that. They have helped bring out the good student that had been hiding in me for so many years," said Navarro.

A Sacred Space

"Inclusion and belonging means to create sacred spaces where students feel heard, seen, and validated. Sacred space means there is a



Helena Suarez-Kaminska

particular level of deference, respect and honor given to that physical location," said Dr. Eric Handy, Interim Dean of Student Equity and Engagement.

Handy feels it imperative that DVC students have sacred spaces on campus where they can express their voice and have free thought.

"Some of our students find their home environment is not a safe space for them. This can be particularly true for DREAMers, students that are fluid with their gender, PRIDE students, students from low-income backgrounds, and historically underrepresented minority groups," said Handy.

Handy feels the college needs to look beyond traditional institutional outcomes metrics.

"Success for these students is that they continue to show up. They visit one of our student centers or the PUMA Center or our new Inclusivity and Wellness Center and they see students and faculty who look like them. They utilize our available resources and that changes their perspective. That changes the trajectory of their lives," said Handy.

Find Yourself Here

"Inclusion is about bringing students into the fold, welcoming them as part of the DVC community. Belonging goes beyond that – it's where a student is more than just included, they feel that they belong here, that this place is for them. I hope all our students, including students from marginalized communities and communities historically underrepresented in higher education, feel that they belong at DVC," said James Wilson, professor of English and LGBTQ Studies at DVC.

"When students feel safe, they are more likely to not just succeed but thrive. If you know about Maslow's hierarchy of needs, you know that safety is extremely basic. Belonging and love come right after safety. If we can help students feel safe and loved, we can help them succeed in reaching their goals," said Wilson.

A New Sacred Space: The DVC Inclusivity and Wellness Center

The new Inclusivity & Wellness Center (IWC) is a collaborative effort with Associated Students of DVC (ASDVC), ensuring that DREAMers, LGBTQIA+ students, students from immigrant communities, historically underrepresented students, and students from low-income backgrounds have access to resources and support in a welcoming, sacred space.

"The center has a vibrant student-created mural with artistic representations of the DVC community. There are butterflies, a Black Power fist, different representations of DREAMers and the meaning of social justice. There are also glorious art pieces that have been dedicated to us from an artist that does social justice and DREAMers work," said Handy.

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Glenda Navarro

75 Years of Success

Continued from page 5

"As a DVC EOPS peer advisor, I met with students one-on-one and was able to connect with them through their stories," said Phenix.

Phenix transferred to Cal State East Bay where he earned his bachelor's degree in sociology, followed by a master's in counseling at Saint Mary's College of California.

Today, he is back on campus as an adjunct counselor and co-coordinator for the Tembo Leaders learning community.

"Where my life is and has been since going to DVC, I have experienced so much that I would not have. I have had family members attend DVC as well and seen it propel their life and career to amazing heights," said Phenix.

The Perfect First Step to a Thriving Career

Matthew P. Guichard feels that community college is the perfect first step to higher education, especially due to the rising cost of four-year universities.

"It's a great start for students, particularly for those like me who weren't sure what to focus on in college," said Guichard.

Guichard completed his general education at DVC, and then transferred to California State University, Chico for his bachelor's degree. He studied law at the McGeorge School of Law at the University of the Pacific and was admitted to the California Bar in 1982. Today, Guichard is the founder and senior partner of Guichard Teng & Garrett, a law firm based in Walnut Creek. He is also the Chair of the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau.

Guichard remembers his time at DVC fondly, and has found himself on campus since, but in a different capacity.

"I've served as a visiting lecturer at DVC, Cal State East Bay, and St. Mary's College of California. And while I was Deputy District Attorney for Contra Costa County, I taught police academy classes at DVC's sister college, Los Medanos College (LMC)," said Guichard.

Guichard encourages students to enroll at DVC prior to a four-year university.

"I had a wonderful experience there, and developed a great respect for DVC and the California Community College system of education," said Guichard.



Matthew P. Guichard

Empowering Pride and Belonging

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Students can access important services and resources that are co-located together.

"The new health center space offers free wellness and support services. Cubicles serve as private spaces for DREAMers to receive free immigration legal services, and for PRIDE students to receive counseling and support. Students can also access financial literacy support from SparkPoint," said Handy.

Handy notes that students were actively involved in planning the space.

"The center has a beautiful lounge area with movable furniture,

enabling students to create the space they need. Overall, the center offers a cross-cultural space that exudes empathy and solidarity for all who enter," said Handy.

Handy understands students need spaces and curriculum that help them see they aren't alone in the world.

"In comfortable spaces, there's an era of us, there's a way we show up, the way we pour into each other. These spaces help students feel seen, heard, and that makes them continue to come back to school," said Handy.

For more information about the DVC Inclusivity and Wellness Center, visit: www.dvc.edu/iwc.

Learning Communities at DVC

Don't go it alone! If you'd like to connect with other students and faculty who share your interests and concerns, you'll want to join a learning community!

- Tembo Leaders: An African American Men's Collective
- Early Childhood Education Professional Development Cohorts
- First Year Experience Program
- Linked Classes
- MESA Program
- Program for Adult Education (PACE)
- Community of Pride
- Puente Program
- Umoja Program
- Year Up Bay Area

To learn more, visit www.dvc.edu/learning-community/.