

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOCUS

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The Rancho Santiago Community College District comprises two campuses, Santa Ana College in Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon College in Orange, pictured above.

## IMPACT REPORT

# COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT INFUSES \$2 BILLION INTO LOCAL ECONOMY

### Programs help create thousands of jobs

By Lou Ponsi,  
contributing writer

The Rancho Santiago Community College District in collaboration with its two colleges, Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College, contributed nearly \$2 billion in income to the Orange County economy in FY2020-21, an economic impact report published by RSCCD showed.

The study showed that RSCCD creates value for county businesses, the workforce and students.

Individually, SAC and SCC contribute \$1.3 billion and \$468.2 million, respectively, accounting for .7% of the county's Gross Regional Product.

This economic presence also contributes to the creation of 20,999 jobs within the county, the report stated.

RSCCD employed 3,112 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, amounting to a payroll of \$214.6 million, much of

which was spent within the county.

An additional \$170.9 million was spent on day-to-day expenses related to facilities, supplies, and professional services.

Former students currently employed in the county workforce contribute \$1.5 billion in added income and \$127.8 million in income was generated by relocated and retained students, the report showed.

Chancellor Marvin Martinez and the RSCCD's board of trustees are adamant that the services the district contracts for are having an economic impact locally, said Enrique Perez, vice chancellor of educational services.

"Apart from that, it's also a student that comes in and all of a sudden goes from either not having a job or a low-paying job to having a higher-paying job," Perez said. "And so that's an economic impact, obviously, because now he or she can buy a home and make more purchases."

The report was compiled by Light-



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Renovations and improvements on campus benefit students and the community.

cast, a labor market analytics firm used by educational institutions worldwide to conduct economic impact studies.

"The study's findings highlight the

impact of RSCCD and our two campuses on the Orange County community," Martinez said. "We are committed to

**ECONOMY » PAGE 5**

## OUTLOOK

### President plans to push Santiago Canyon College to No. 1

#### Kim has ambitious goals in her first year

By Greg Hardesty,  
contributing writer

Jeannie G. Kim turns to the whiteboard in her office at Santiago Canyon College.

On it are columns of color-coded goals she wrote down as she approaches the completion of her first year as president of the community college in Orange.

"It's a little ambitious," Kim says with

a laugh. "When I showed my plan to members of my executive staff, it took their breath away."

But Kim, the college's seventh president and the first Asian American in the role, is determined to get SCC, currently ranked No. 7 out of the state's 116 community colleges by BestColleges.com, to No. 1 in a few years.

"It's a transformative plan," she says, "but I want us to be No. 1. And these goals will help get us there."

Don't bet against her.

With 34-plus years in administrative roles in higher education, Kim has a track record of success.

And she has the DNA to do her best whatever the task, as well as a desire to give back to the educational system that has served her and her large extended immigrant family well.

"I know what higher education can do," says Kim, who was 5 years old when

she immigrated with her father and two younger brothers to Southern California, joining her mother who arrived two years earlier on an immigrant visa to work as a nurse when the country had a shortage of them.

"I know the power of higher education," says Kim. "I experienced it myself, and so did my family. I've seen it work again and again and again."

#### Community service

Kim started at SCC on Jan. 18, 2023 - her first stint as president of a community college.

She came from the Riverside Community College District, where she served as the interim vice chancellor of educational services and strategic planning and associate vice chancellor of grants and economic development.

Before that, she held administrative

**PRESIDENT » PAGE 5**



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Jeannie G. Kim, president of Santiago Canyon College

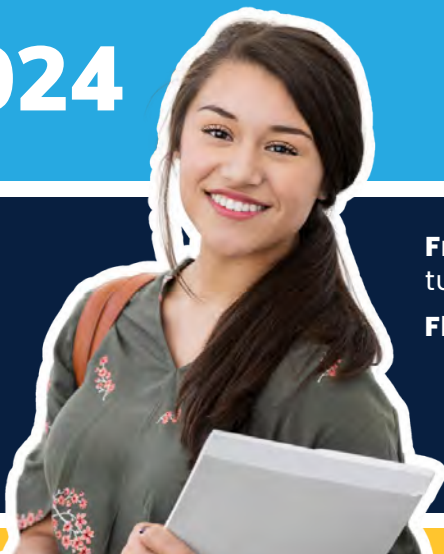
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APPRENTICESHIPS

# Chancellor emphasizes aligning education to industry needs

RSCCD Communications

California plans funding to expand apprenticeships despite a revenue decline and expected \$68 billion deficit.

The California Department of Industrial Relations, through a comprehensive five-point action plan, has earmarked substantial funds from the 2022-2023 state budget - over \$231 million - with a lofty goal to propel apprenticeship numbers to half a million by 2029. The Rancho Santiago Community College District, under the leadership of Chancellor Marvin Martinez, has been appointed by State Chancellor Sonya Christian to lead the way in modeling successful apprenticeship programs, positioning the district as a pioneer in workforce development.

Chancellor Marvin Martinez kicked off the Inaugural Fall 2023 California Regions at Work Conference with a keynote on apprenticeships that underscores the district's commitment to aligning education with industry needs. Apprenticeships offer students a distinctive advantage - the ability to pursue education while earning a living wage and enjoying benefits. This approach not only mitigates financial burdens for students but also ensures they gain practical experience directly aligned with industry demands.

"Apprenticeships provide students the opportunity to achieve not just a job but a fulfilling career with a living wage that empowers them to stay in California, contribute to their communities, and build a prosperous future for their families," said Martinez.

Extending beyond individual growth, the impact of fostering a skilled workforce and retaining talent within Orange County reverberates through the local economy. When individuals choose to stay, their families contribute to the community, creating a positive cycle of growth.

A testament to this, RSCCD has significantly bolstered the Orange County economy, contributing nearly \$2 billion according to the 2020-2021 Economic



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

From left are SCC President Jeannie Kim, SAC President Annebell Nery, RSCCD Chancellor Marvin Martinez, RSCCD Assistant Vice Chancellor of Economic and Workforce Development and OCRC Executive Director Adriene "Alex" Davis, SOCCCD Chancellor Julianna Barnes, state Sen. Thomas J. Umberg, NOCCCD Chancellor Byron Clift Breland.

Impact Study commissioned by the Orange County Regional Consortium Governance Council.

In the face of California's budget

deficit, the earmarked funds for apprenticeships stand as a transformative lifeline. By tapping into available state funds and crafting successful appren-

ticeship models, the district is not just navigating the current financial landscape; it is actively shaping the future of the region.



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## MIXED-MEDIA

# His passion for comic books inspired Del Rosario's art

## Real Heroes' messages part of his creations

By **Jenelyn Russo**,  
contributing writer

Santiago Community College graphic design professor Fernando Del Rosario is a creative at heart.

Whether he is developing marketing solutions for his clients through his agency, Concept Zombie, producing original artwork for local gallery showings or inspiring the next generation of graphic design students, Del Rosario is always creating.

Earlier this fall, Del Rosario shared some of his personal artwork with the SCC community when a portion of his Real Heroes collection was on display at the SCC Art Gallery in September.

The genesis of the Real Heroes collection is rooted in Del Rosario's childhood love for comic books. Born in the Philippines, he and his family moved to Detroit when he was 11 years old in search of a better life.

During those first years in the U.S., Del Rosario began reading and collecting comic books. To him, they were a portal into the fantastic world of superheroes, with inspiring stories of how the characters helped those around them who were less fortunate.

"When we came to America, a lot of people helped us out, from helping us find an apartment or a house to rent, to clothes that I wore in middle school and high school," Del Rosario said. "So when I read these books, the stories really resonated with me."

Born with the creative gene, Del Rosario graduated from Detroit's College for Creative Studies with a graphic design degree. He later moved to Southern California to pursue marketing and advertising work with the agency that handled Taco Bell. But he never had the heart to part with the comic books he spent hours reading as a child.

So, as creatives do, Del Rosario came up with a unique solution for his beloved collection — he reimagined the comic books into large-scale pieces of art, a way to share the love and joy these stories and characters gave him as a young boy with a new audience through



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS  
Fernando Del Rosario, professor of graphic design at Santiago Community College, shows off his passion for graphic art.

a different medium.

These mixed-media pieces were created by taking pages from the vintage comic books and assembling giant patterned collages, some as large as four feet by seven feet. To incorporate messages within his art, Del Rosario added

quotes from those he considers to be real-life superheroes, words from the likes of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Maya Angelou and Malala, to name a few.

Over the past 10 years, Del Rosario has completed more than 200 pieces in his collection, a labor of love that has al-

lowed him to experience a new level of creative freedom.

"As a creative director in design and marketing, every piece of work that I create, whether it be a logo or an ad or a billboard, I'm servicing a client, a brand, a company or an organization," Del Rosario said. "This art that I create is really for me. That level of freedom of creating something, regardless of whether people will accept it or not, is quite freeing as an artist."

As it turns out, Del Rosario's Real Heroes work has been well-received, as the 20-plus pieces he had on display this fall at the SCC Art Gallery marked the 59th gallery showing for his collection.

Although Del Rosario has been teaching at various colleges and universities for the last 21 years, this is his first semester at SCC, and it was always his desire to have the chance to share his work with the campus community, an opportunity that has allowed him a new way to engage with his students.

"To be able to share that in a college-level venue is equally as freeing and amazing because I'm able to share that story with the next generation of creatives, the next generation of artists," Del Rosario said. "And to be able to say to them, 'I totally understand the value of creating something for a career,' but in addition to that, they should equally and unapologetically pursue creating something for themselves."

Even today, Del Rosario is still creating and adding to his Real Heroes collection. Previous gallery showings in Orange County have included Las Laguna Art Gallery, Chuck Jones Center for Creativity and John Wayne Airport. Current showings include the Mission Viejo Library and the Kaleidoscope Center in Mission Viejo.

With a focus on introducing students to the "wonderful, amazing and creative world of graphic design," Del Rosario takes seriously his role at SCC and hopes that being able to share his personal art within the campus walls inspires a sense of bravery in his students as they pursue their own creative paths.

"I want to be able to speak to the next generation ... to have the courage to put themselves out there," Del Rosario said. "It's difficult to be vulnerable, but I think it's part of the creative process, to conjure up that courage to not just create it, but to share it."



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS  
Del Rosario talks about his project with visitors to the SCC Art Gallery.

## STAFF PROFILE

# From cleats to courage: A journey in law enforcement

RSCCD Communications

Orange County native Eric Hatch was born on Independence Day, a mere foreshadowing of a life that would be dedicated to service. Staying true to his roots, Hatch enrolled at Santa Ana College, carving his path as a running back on the football team under the mentorship of coach Dave Ogas. This experience would later help shape his unwavering determination and resilience, qualities that defined his career.

In 1989, Hatch graduated from the Orange County Sheriff's Academy, equipped with a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice. He began what would become a 32-year tenure in law enforcement. His career spans a diverse array of roles including corrections, patrol, investigations, and SWAT unit.

In 2005, Hatch's career took another leap forward when he joined the Region-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC HATCH  
Eric Hatch, Santa Ana College alum, returns to campus as part of the security department.

al Narcotics Suppression Program. He helped dismantled major drug trafficking and money laundering operations, earning him an official commendation.

The pinnacle of Hatch's career came

with his transfer to the homicide division in 2009. Over 12 years, he investigated over a hundred homicides and more than 25 officer-involved shootings. His specialized training and tenacity were instrumental in solving some high-profile cases.

Hatch worked during the 1992 Los Angeles riots and made contributions to Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the Special Olympics. His investigative skill earned him the Helene and Joseph Sherwood Prize from the Anti-Defamation League for his role in the Blaze Bernstein murder investigation.

In 2021, Eric embarked on a new chapter, joining the Rancho Santiago Community College District as a senior district safety officer. He has applied his extensive law enforcement knowledge to create a safer college experience for students.

Hatch and his wife, Stephanie, have a 14-year-old son, Fisher.

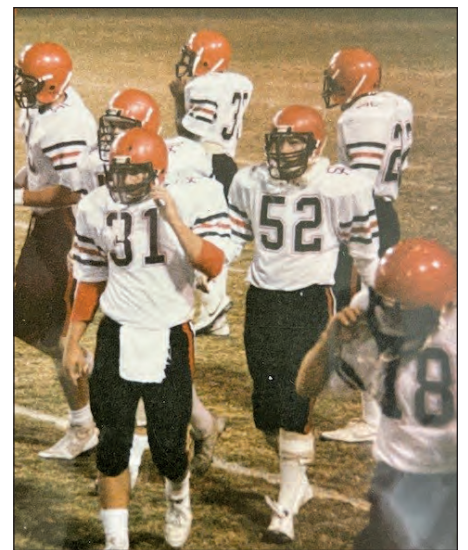


PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC HATCH  
Hatch, No. 31, played running back for the Santa Ana College Dons.

## FACULTY PROFILE

# Infantryman, combat veteran, police officer, student, teacher

## Gardiner took courses while in Army

By Nicole Gregory,  
contributing writer

While serving in Afghanistan, Justin Gardiner managed to take college courses between his duties as an infantryman. “We only had a couple of computers that had internet access,” he said, “so I’d run up to there and download everything onto a thumb drive, then come back and then work on my stuff on my laptop all week.”

Under these difficult circumstances, Gardiner kept taking classes whenever he could, and it paid off in ways he could not have imagined.

Today, he works as an adjunct professor at Santiago Canyon College and is the code compliance manager for the city of Cathedral City, positions he is thrilled to hold. From infantryman to college professor at Santiago Canyon College and city manager has been “a nonstop crazy journey,” said the 37-year-old veteran.

Born in the San Fernando Valley city of Northridge, Gardiner was homeschooled until he attended Cathedral City High School. He joined the Army as an infantryman and was stationed in Germany with the 173rd Airborne. Whenever he could, he took college classes on his computer.

He deployed to Afghanistan from 2007 to 2009. “As an infantryman, I was assigned to the personal security detachment,” Gardiner explained. “We were essentially the bodyguards for the command sergeant major and the battalion commander. So anywhere they went, we went.” Still, he said, “I was pumping out college classes while I was downrange.”

Gardiner sustained a serious injury to his left ankle and was awarded a Purple Heart. He returned to Germany for several years and then came home to California.

Eventually, he earned his associate degree in criminal justice, and after he got out of the Army, he was hired on as a police officer. He continued to take classes, working around his job schedule.

“I was going to National University to earn my bachelor’s,” Gardiner said. “We met once a week on Tuesdays and then all day on Saturdays. I would schedule my break or lunch hour around when class was supposed to meet,” he said. “I’d have my radio on and all my equipment — I’d be in full police gear — and I would sneak into the back of class, and I’d radio in that I was taking my break, and if an emergency happened, I was available. There were times when I had to pop up, and take off and run out, and say, ‘Sorry, professor!’”

Despite the obstacles, Gardiner earned his bachelor’s degree in home-



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTIN GARDINER

Santiago Canyon College alum Justin Gardiner has had a storied career in the military, law enforcement and now education.

land security and emergency management with a minor in criminal justice administration. When an opportunity came up in Riverside County in the code compliance department, Gardiner applied for the job and was hired.

Code compliance was an exciting new challenge, “especially coming from my background in the military and law enforcement,” he said.

Code compliance, he said, is “essentially holding property owners accountable to the city standards and ordinance and municipal code.” The purpose is to create safe, clean neighborhoods in which people can thrive. “And if we’re providing that, then it’s going to entice other people and other businesses to come to this city, invest their money here, and raise their families here,” Gardiner said.

This means identifying abandoned vehicles parked all over properties, property maintenance issues such as green

pools of water that are mosquito breeding grounds, visual blights, and accumulated rubbish throughout a property.

Gardiner eventually went to Cabazon in unincorporated Riverside County, working as a code officer, where he excelled. “Within my first year I was elected to the Board of Representatives for the California Code Officers Association,” he said.

Gardiner still needed to earn his certification for code enforcement officer status, so he enrolled at Santiago Canyon College because it offered every class he needed. He met Sergio Verano, the program administrator for the code compliance courses.

“What I liked about Santiago Canyon College was that in the code compliance courses, I wasn’t dealing with college professors, but with subject matter experts in the field who were sharing their knowledge,” he said.

His training as a police officer and the

fact that he had also trained others in his career, gave him a good foundation for code compliance work. Several SCC administrators noticed Gardiner’s enthusiasm and experience and reached out to see if he would be interested in becoming a part-time code compliance professor.

“I was totally shocked,” he said, and after a few interviews, he was hired.

Another reason SCC felt like a good fit was the college’s Veterans Center. Gardiner said it is the best he’s ever encountered. “I’ve been to quite a few higher education facilities, and I’ve dealt with quite a few veterans centers. None of them can hold a light to Santiago Canyon College.”

What makes SCC’s Veterans Center special? “Their attentiveness to the veterans and the welcoming vibe that they have,” said Gardiner. “They work above and beyond to make sure that their veterans are getting taken care of.”

## EDSMART.ORG RATINGS

## Santiago Canyon College ranked 8th among best in California



RSCCD Communications

Santiago Canyon College received another high ranking among community colleges in California recently.

In its 2024 list, independent college

ranking research outlet EDsmart.org ranked SCC as the eighth-best out of 116 community colleges throughout the state. EDsmart.org evaluates academic quality, affordability, student satisfaction and median earnings of former students.

Among its reasons for SCC’s ranking, EDsmart.org cited the variety of academic disciplines in which students could earn associate degrees and technical certificates, articulation agreements ensuring easy transfer of credits to four-year universities after earning an associate degree, small class sizes and graduates obtaining well-paying jobs thanks to their education and training from SCC.

The rankings were compiled with an

emphasis on academic quality, affordability, student retention rates and the median earnings of former students who received federal financial aid, at 10 years after entering the college, using information from the National Center for Education Statistics, College Scorecard, Pay-scale and college websites.

“We are pleased to be recognized again as one of the best community colleges in the region and state,” said SCC President Jeannie G. Kim. “I am especially pleased with this ranking because it recognizes the fact that students graduating from SCC earn more because we are focused on providing degrees and career education pathways that lead to high-wage,

high-demand jobs in Orange County.”

The ranking from EDsmart.org comes on the heels of Santiago Canyon being ranked seventh in California by BestColleges.com, 11th by Intelligent.com and 15th by Niche.com earlier this year.

“The rankings place us firmly among the upper echelon of community colleges in the state,” Kim said. “We look forward to moving up the ranking charts as we continue to grow our enrollments and develop new and exciting academic and career pathways to serve more community members seeking certification to meet regional workforce development needs or those looking for direct transfer pathways to four-year institutions.”



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Santiago Canyon College has racked up accolades from several education-ranking websites.

## COVID-19 LESSONS

# A look at a pandemic-era letter-writing collection

RSCCD Communications

People around the world found creative methods of expressions and socialization amid the period of mandatory shutdown and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some leaned further into technology to find connectivity and expression, Santiago Canyon College Associate Professor of English Ryan Murphy and two of his friends did something less technical.

Murphy, Chris Hoke and Nicholas Webber – friends from childhood – exchanged letters during the pandemic through a shared Google Doc. Looking back at their correspondence, the friends decided to share their experience with the world. On Oct. 26, the friends met at Santiago Canyon College and discussed what became known as The Future Forest.

“The more we talked about it, the more we realized the things that were good for us during the pandemic were good for us now,” Murphy said. The group uploaded the letters to a website that releases the letters on the corresponding date it was originally written. “The experience of seeing it (unfold) is like the experience of reading something new,” Murphy said. “There’s nothing like this in literary nonfiction.”

The trio explained their thoughts behind the letter-writing, how it started and why they decided to share their correspondence.

“It became something we didn’t expect,” Murphy said. “When we began telling others about what we did in 2020, they were interested in seeing it.”



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

From left, childhood friends Chris Hoke, Nicholas Webber and Santiago Canyon College Associate Professor of English Ryan Murphy shared a letter-writing project during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to letting the world see the writings of three friends, Murphy saw an educational value to sharing the letters. The discussion on Oct. 26, was

titled “Letter Writing in the Time of COVID: How the Humanities Saved Us and Can Save You Too!”

“This is also an appeal for the human-

ities,” Murphy said. “There’s a goodness in letter writing.”

To learn more about The Future Forest, visit [www.futureforestletters.com](http://www.futureforestletters.com).

## Economy

FROM PAGE 1

providing a conducive educational environment, and these findings reaffirm our dedication to our students and the local economy.”

The report is being sent to every taxpayer in the district because they are the stakeholders in the district, Perez said.

“They are the ones paying for all this,” the vice chancellor said. “Without them, we couldn’t be doing what we’re doing. They are the ones that are giving students a second and a third chance at a career and a life and, frankly, we want to make sure that we get this information to them so that they know the incredible contribution that they’re making by their investment.”

Of all the contributors to the county’s economy generated by the district, the most important is the creation of jobs, he said.

Taxpayers are generally willing to invest in a community college that aims to educate the community and create jobs. One mission of the district is to determine which careers will be in demand in the future and create curriculums that will prepare students for those careers, Perez said.

“When we look at economic impact, we want to make sure that both our colleges are very focused on providing the education and the training to ensure that students coming in are moving into those high-paying jobs and then coming back into our community, Perez said.

The district must also prepare those students who plan to advance from a community college to a four-year institution, Perez said.

The 2020-2021 Economic Impact Study was commissioned by the Orange County Regional Consortium Governance Council through Strong Workforce Program investments.

Data used in the study is compiled from several sources, including the FY 2020-21 academic and financial reports from RSCCD, industry and employment data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the U.S. Census Bureau.



PHOTO COURTESY RSCCD COMMUNICATIONS

Greenery and open spaces are a prominent feature of the Santiago Canyon College campus.

## President

FROM PAGE 1

positions at Occidental College, UCLA, Cal State Dominguez Hills, Cal State Fullerton and Riverside City College.

It has been an impressive career for a girl who had to make a beeline for the bathroom at home because she didn’t know how to ask in English where the restroom was when she started kindergarten.

That humbling experience led to her being chosen to help tutor other youngsters from South Korea who were new to the school – the beginning of Kim’s deep experience in building social and cultural networks in education, particularly for historically underserved and underrepresented students.

Kim was raised in La Mirada and graduated from La Mirada High School, where she was junior class president.

Leadership came naturally to her.

### A natural leader

Initially attending UCLA with plans to become a pediatric physician, Kim went through six majors before earning her undergraduate degree in cultural anthropology.

She was super involved at UCLA, serv-

ing her senior year as community service commissioner at a time when community service at universities was being prioritized. Kim was involved nationally and helped start the movement at UCLA.

That experience became the building block of her educational philosophy to not rely on established ways of doing things or a one-size-fits-all-students approach – a mission she’s brought to SCC.

### On a hiring tear

Kim, who earned a master’s degree in cultural anthropology from CSUF and a doctorate in higher education policy, evaluation and reform from Claremont Graduate University, goes over some goals on the whiteboard.

Currently, with an annualized full-time equivalent enrollment of 8,500 and a headcount over 15,500 for this fall term, she wants to grow FTES enrollment to 10,000 by June 2026, which would free up an additional \$1 million in state funding for the college by bumping it from a small community college to a medium-size institution.

She wants to increase to 25 the number of apprenticeship programs SCC offers, from an already robust 11.

She aims to jump-start the SCC Foundation and alumni association, among other goals.

“In order to do this,” Kim says, “there’s a lot of strategy that has to be employed.”

Since being hired, Kim has been on a hiring tear, bringing aboard a historic 13 tenure-track faculty and six long-term substitutes who are considered tenure-track faculty their first year.

She also has hired key administrative positions, including a vice president of academic affairs and a vice president of student services.

### A great hire

Willie Hagan, president of Cal State Dominguez Hills from 2012-2018, says SCC is fortunate to have Kim.

He worked with her for several years when Kim was director of research and development and he was vice president of administration at CSUF and later hired her to join his leadership team in the president’s office at Dominguez Hills.

“I say this about very few people, but Jeannie is near genius,” Hagan says. “She is one of the smartest people I know. Her ability to weave together massive amounts of information and data into understandable and persuasive narrative is incredible.”

While at Cal State Dominguez Hills, Kim contributed to building successful relationships with various federal and state agencies and key community leaders, Hagan says.

“What was fun about working with Jeannie was her great sense of humor combined with her strong intellect,” he

says. “Another great thing about Jeannie was that she was never afraid to argue with me. She kept me on my toes and was always eager to learn the rationale behind positions that differed from hers.”

### ‘SMART goals’

Kim is a single mother of three adult children.

She takes care of her profoundly disabled son, Nathaniel, 25, at home.

Daughter Elizabeth is studying school counseling at New York University, and daughter Kaitlin graduates this month from UC Santa Cruz, two quarters early because she attended SCC as a high school student through concurrent enrollment.

Kim studied classical piano when young and plays occasionally. She hopes to soon be able to spend more time playing and indulging in another passion, surfing, which she took up a few years ago when she turned 50. She owns a longboard.

For now, though, most of Kim’s energies are devoted to building up SCC.

“I’m very much a ‘SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) goals’-directed person,” she says, “and goals have to be measurable.”

Her whiteboard doesn’t lie. “I’m all about new ideas and innovation,” Kim says, “and that’s what we have to be doing here.”

## COMMUNICATIONS

# Sharing his real-world experience in the classroom

Scott Hays draws on long, varied career

By Lou Ponsi,  
contributing writer

Scott Hays had never planned on being a teacher.

Yet, for more than 20 years, Hays has been doing exactly that, serving as an instructor at Santiago Canyon College since 2017 and at multiple community colleges in Orange County since 2001.

"It's a great campus," Hays said. "It's got a great staff. It's got a great student body, and I really enjoy teaching there."

With a master's degree in communications and English literature, along with decades of experience in mass media as a print and broadcast journalist, a producer of television and radio programming, and video documentaries, Hays combines his real-world experience and education to teach a variety of subjects.

His teaching resume includes courses in journalism, critical thinking, mass communications and literature.

"And every semester is a different set of classes," Hays said. "It keeps me engaged creatively and intellectually."

This semester, Hays is teaching an English composition class and a critical thinking class at SCC.

After earning a master's in communication from Cal State Fullerton, Hays plunged right in, first as a freelance journalist, writing for newspapers, magazines and books before transitioning to radio, television and video projection.

In 2007, he earned a master's in English literature from UC Irvine.

Hays's latest venture, and arguably most successful, has been the formation of OCWorld, an award-winning, nonprofit multimedia company that produces programming in and about Orange County.

As the only nonprofit multimedia firm in the county, OCWorld produces a weekly public affairs show that airs on KLCS-PBS and is broadcast to 15.5 million households from Santa Barbara to San Diego.

"We look for stories that aren't being told," Hays said. "We interview people that may not necessarily always have a voice."

The OCWorld documentary "Hope Dies Last," which focused on the impact of Alzheimer's disease on California communities, was awarded a Golden



PHOTO BY DREW A. KELLEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Scott Hays holds degrees in communication and English literature, and has worked as an educator, journalist, and award-winning documentarian.

Mike for Best Long Form Programming or Documentary at the 73rd Annual Golden Mike Awards.

In 2022, OCWorld also took home a Best in Show award at the Los Angeles Film & Script Festival for a documentary short titled "Coastal Crisis: California's Vanishing Beaches."

The documentary also took first place in the Real OC category at this year's Orange County Press Club Awards event.

Hays co-founded OCWorld with Manuel Gomez, who served as vice chancellor of community affairs at UC Irvine from 1995 to 2010, was interim vice president for educational partnerships in the University of California Office of the President, and was a program officer with the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education in Washington D.C.

Community colleges sector provides a crucial transition point between the K-12 education and the working world or for transferring to a university, Gomez said. The community college model

is almost custom-made for an innovator such as Hays, he said.

"The community college was engaged in vocational training, in teaching, and in transition transfer research teaching," Gomez said. "Scott Hays reflects all that inventiveness and innovativeness in his teaching and in his connection with students and in my relationship with him in the invention and creation of OC World."

Hays, who is himself a product of a community college education, was drawn to the classroom after seeing a fellow freelance writer teaching at a community college.

"I thought to myself, you know, maybe I'll give it a try," said Hays, who started his second career as a teacher at Saddleback College. "I don't know if I'm going to even like teaching, and I wasn't about to get into something I didn't like. They hired me that semester, and I've never looked back. Luckily, I fell in love with it."

"I have no doubt that he's got to be

an excellent teacher because he's a wonderful collaborator," said Rick Reiff, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who's been with the Orange County Business Journal for more than 30 years, including 10 as an editor.

Reiff and Hays have collaborated on several projects together.

"He likes to hear different viewpoints," Reiff said. "He's not judgmental. He wants to know what your opinion is, so he's got wonderful qualities. I'm sure as a teacher that works. I'm sure he doesn't intimidate students. I'm sure he works with them."

It's the interaction with students that Hays finds most rewarding, especially when seeing a student "light up with a piece of knowledge that they didn't have before."

"My goal is always to allow each student to shine at least one time during the semester in my class. To give them an opportunity to feel like they've accomplished something in front of their peers, that's just a great feeling."



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