Part of the magic of community colleges is that they are open to everyone. Whether it’s an honors student who wants to save a little money before transferring to a university, or a working parent who wants to move up in their job, CSM draws students from every imaginable circumstance. Many CSM students, though, face some sort of disadvantage or didn’t have all the opportunities they would have liked. Many students need financial assistance, especially with the astronomical cost of living in the Bay Area. Nearly all college students need a mentor—a professor or a staff member who sees their potential and can guide them along the way.

This is where CSM truly excels. We have a knack for identifying the student who needs a boost, we find the right resources for that student, and we stick around and make sure they get through their educational goals. It’s something you won’t find in most four-year colleges and universities. But at CSM, it’s what we live for.

This Fall 2019 Schedule of Classes looks at the many ways we identify and support students who can use a boost. Our cover story looks at how we actively seeking out under-represented students (Latinos, first-generation college students, and many others) to pursue studies and careers in the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). California is in need of a well-trained workforce in the coming decades, and we especially need to bring more people of color into the STEM professions. Two of our grant-funded STEM support programs—METaS and MESA—have combined forces to offer an impressive array of services designed to attract and support students in the STEM fields.

Our page one story on CSM custodian Carlos Ruiz is inspirational and makes me so proud to lead this college. Carlos was cleaning a classroom one night when professor Michelle Mullane stopped him to ask why he wasn’t enrolled in college classes. She and other faculty members mentored Carlos, who went on to earn an associate degree in ethnic studies at CSM. He transferred to San Francisco State, where he will receive a bachelor's in urban studies this year. That is the kind of transformation that happens every day at CSM, thanks to the dedication of our faculty and the hard work and perseverance of our students.

We also look at two important programs that give support in other ways to CSM students. EOPS (Extended Opportunity Programs & Services) works with students from disadvantaged backgrounds to get them resources like scholarships, free textbooks, access to tutoring and mentoring. Many of our graduates say they would not have made it without EOPS. Our learning communities bring in students of similar backgrounds—Latino, African American, Pacific Islander—and gives them a close community that helps support them through school.

This is a truly remarkable college. Just about anyone who needs some help will find it here. I am grateful to the faculty and staff members who help our students succeed, and we are all grateful to this community for supporting our work. Have a great fall.

Michael Claire, CSM President