

SAN MATEO COUNTY  
**COMMUNITY**  
COLLEGE DISTRICT

*Cañada College • College of San Mateo • Skyline College*

# Combined Report of the District Chancellor and College Presidents

---



*San Mateo County Community College District Distributes more than \$8 million Directly to Students from Federal Pandemic Relief Funding*

## **SMCCCD DISTRIBUTES MORE THAN \$8M DIRECTLY TO STUDENTS FROM FEDERAL HEERF II FUNDS**

District receives total of \$13.3 million in Federal Pandemic Relief Funding to support students and respond to COVID-19



The San Mateo County Community College District has received \$13.3 million in federal relief funding from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II). Of that funding, approximately two-thirds will go directly to students as cash payments to offset hardships during the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining third of the funds will be used to offset costs incurred by the District and its three colleges for COVID-related expenses such as technology, health and safety equipment, and training.

“Our community college students were already struggling to make ends meet, and COVID has made it tougher than ever,” said SMCCCD Chancellor Michael Claire. “The majority of the federal funds we’ve received are going directly to support students, and this will make a difference in students being able to stay in school.”

The most recent federal funding, combined with \$5.6 million received as part of the CARES Act from spring 2020, brings total federal pandemic relief funding for the San Mateo County Community College District to almost \$19 million. Of that total funding, two-thirds (\$16.8 million) is directly supporting students at Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College.

Federal guidelines allow for HEERF funding to be used for direct student aid and institutional expenses related to COVID-19 to ensure learning continues for students during the pandemic. The federal programs require at least half of the funding to go as direct aid to students to help cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, healthcare, and child care. The District allocated more of the funds it received to directly support students than the federal programs required.

In spring and fall 2020, almost 5,000 students from Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College received CARES funds payments ranging from \$500 to \$1,100. In spring 2021 and fall 2021, students will receive direct payments ranging from \$750 to \$1,650.

The District’s colleges have remained mostly online since March 2020. Classes will continue online through December 2021, though more programs may be converted to in-person classes if circumstances allow in the fall semester.

## **SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS FROM MYANMAR**



There are currently more than 50 students from Myanmar enrolled at Cañada College, College of San Mateo, and Skyline College. Students from that country have long enrolled in our colleges as part of the SMCCCD International Student Program.

Most of these students had returned to Myanmar due to the pandemic and have been continuing their education online. However, the escalating political and humanitarian crisis there



## BOARD REPORT | MARCH 24, 2021

continues to create severe hardships, uncertainty and fear for the people in Myanmar. Due to the military coup and subsequent crackdown on civilians, some students may experience power outages, prolonged interruptions in internet service, access to financial institutions or other disruptions to daily life.

District leaders have instructed faculty and staff to be supportive of our students from Myanmar. They are facing great hardships, possibly even issues relating to their own personal safety. As a District committed to student success and social justice, we are encouraging compassion in supporting these students. International Student Program staff have contacted our Myanmar students personally and have reached out to their instructors. ISP staff will maintain regular contact with these students to offer support and help to address issues, and can offer support and guidance to faculty and staff if issues arise.

The District proudly continues its commitment to global learning. Our students from Myanmar are an important part of the college communities and District family. Our District faculty and staff are encouraged to help support these students as they face this challenge in the midst of an ongoing global pandemic.

Guzman was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in Manhattan. He worked as a Youth Counselor while performing in street theatre and independent films and graduated from The City College of New York. Since Guzman's big break on "Miami Vice," he has appeared in more than 100 feature films including: "We're the Millers," "Boogie Nights," "Magnolia," "Traffic," "Turbo," "Punch Drunk Love," and "Carlito's Way."



### CAÑADA COLLEGE HOSTS CONVERSATION WITH ACTOR LUIS GUZMAN

As part of its ongoing commitment to celebrating diversity and inclusion, Cañada College hosted an important conversation on February 22, 2021 with Latino Thought Makers award-winning screenwriter, actor, and author Rick Najera, featuring renowned speaker, award-winning actor and social activist, Luis Guzman. Latino Thought Makers is a platform that provides a respectful and inclusive safe-space for educational discussions about all social, racial, and cultural issues with knowledgeable and highly-esteemed guest speakers.

Najera and Guzman began their conversation about race by sharing their experiences growing up in the streets of New York versus Los Angeles. Their shared feeling of survival of the fittest throughout their upbringing displays the numerous disparities within Latinx neighborhoods. Although there are specificities to each respective city, both distinguished speakers agreed that the streets either raise or break Latinx children. Guzman elaborated, "in a place like New York City, childhood is about surviving the streets, and as a parent now, I wanted to ensure my children had a real childhood just as all children, regardless of race, deserve." It is this same unwavering passion for equity amongst marginalized groups that guarantees positive change is continuous in the Latinx community.

## BOARD REPORT | MARCH 24, 2021

Najera debuted clips from Guzman's previous outstanding roles and stressed, Guzman's role within the film community is to be the voice of authenticity amongst imitation, for Guzman's strength is his individuality. Following this, Najera and Guzman brought up the important topic of type-casting in the film industry. In the beginning of Guzman's acting career, the roles he was offered were, what Guzman described, "parts like being a drug dealer, a murderer, or robber. Through the evolution of my artistry, my roles changed." The film industry's narrative is relevant because it affects the universal portrayal of Latinx people. It is important that as a collective society, we confirm the stories that are being told are accurate and sensitive to the struggle that Latinos have had to endure for generations.

Guzman shared the disservice society practices today which is allowing the youth to be desensitized from global issues such as sex-trafficking, homelessness, and wealth disparities. During preparation for an acting role, Guzman was, "homeless for three days in cold New York City. It was the hardest thing I ever did and I finally understand the travesty that is becoming a victim of U.S. capitalism." He added that the youth, and especially minority youth, need to educate themselves so that they can pursue higher education and avoid obstacles such as the school to prison pipeline.

When asked by a Cañada student, "What would your advice be for first-generation college students looking to make their parents proud?" Guzman responded, "love your family and yourself unconditionally. Also, make sure to be helpful without having to be asked. Most importantly, never forget where you came from because someday people will look up to you. Being an inspiration is key and being an inspiration is love. Also, give back to your community because that was where you got your start." Najera and Guzman both confessed that when you start making money and putting it in the bank it's easy to forget your roots, but you have to remember the environment and the people are what encouraged you to start earning that money in the first place. The only things that stay consistent in your life are the relationships you nurture.

Najera and Guzman ended their conversation by advising students to do their part by voicing their stories on social platforms. Guzman said, "nowadays we have the freedom to create more for ourselves. People of color are the power brokers, we do not need permission to create freely." Najera and Guzman

both agreed it is the responsibility of Latino people to take back the narrative and rewrite what it means to be a Latinx person in America.

The event was recorded and can be viewed [here](#). The last Latino Thought Makers event of the year will be held on April 28 from 3:30 - 5 p.m. with the featured guest to be announced. RSVP [here](#) to join the conversation.

### CAÑADA'S OFFERS LIVE VIRTUAL DROP-IN HOURS FOR STUDENTS

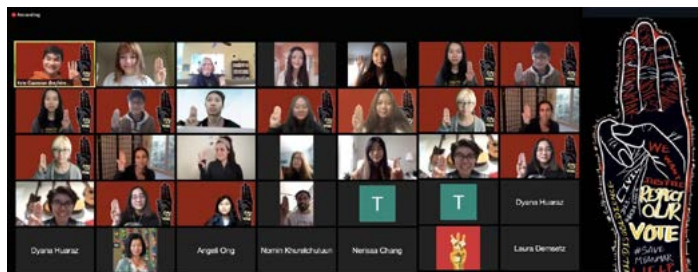


Cañada College's [Welcome Center](#) offers live, drop-in zoom hours in partnership with our College Outreach Student Ambassadors. The zoom drop-in [schedule is listed online](#) and spans Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Students are encouraged to pop into the virtual sessions as needed to ask questions, seek clarification, and connect with ambassadors who are also students and can offer live peer support for the student experience.

This service for students was carefully planned by Student Services leaders to meet the increased request for just-in-time support with a variety of questions. Students are able to read even more background information about the Student Ambassadors who will be supporting them on the [Outreach Ambassadors profile page](#). This update to our virtual support system for students is meant to center the student experience, further build out peer-to-peer support for the campus, and offer live and virtual drop-in hours for the community.

# College of San Mateo

## CSM STUDENTS JOIN FORCES TO SUPPORT BURMESE STUDENTS



On Thursday, March 11, 2021, multiple student groups joined forces to hold a virtual Myanmar Student Panel. The event was held to provide Burmese students a space to share their experiences, speak their truths, and educate the CSM community about the military coup and subsequent humanitarian crisis taking place in Myanmar.

The panel primarily consisted of women to highlight their voices for Women’s History Month. Panelists included current CSM students and alumni, as well as Burmese students from local four-year universities. The mix of perspectives provided insight into the various levels of support the panelists have received from their academic and local communities.

A CSM student panelist said, “It’s hard to study and pay attention in classes because I’m constantly thinking about my country.” Another panelist who is a CSM alumna and current San Jose State University student reminded the audience: “[W]e’re not talking to professors that we’re going through this anymore. Although we told them the first time, that doesn’t mean that we’re no longer going through this. We’re still going through this. We’re just not repeating it.”

By the end of the event, audience members’ eyes and hearts were opened to the physical, mental, and political challenges Burmese students are currently facing. As the event concluded, attendees were encouraged to help advocate for all of those affected in Myanmar.

The event was hosted by Alpha Gamma Sigma (AGS) with collaboration from ASCSM Advocacy, Cultural Awareness, and Public Relations Boards, Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), and Katipunon (KTP).

[Watch on Zoom](#) (public)

[Watch on Panopto](#) (SMCCCD employees/students)

## CSM LAUNCHES 24/7 ON-DEMAND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS



In February, as part of a districtwide effort, CSM Wellness Services launched CSMTalkNow, a free 24/7 on demand emotional support for students. Students can use this new service to gain immediate access to a mental health professional to discuss stress, anxiety, depression, grief and loss and much more.

CSMTalkNow is supported by TimelyMD, an independent company, and does not offer access to CSM personal counseling staff. The service is ideal for students who need immediate support or those that need help during nights, weekends, or campus closures.

Learn more by visiting [www.csmtalknow.com](http://www.csmtalknow.com).



## **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM HOSTS EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOP SERIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**



The Skyline College International Student Program (ISP) hosted a virtual event on March 9, 2021, educating the college's international students about their employment opportunities. This event provided information about the processes of the F-1 student employment authorization, how to get started if interested, and offered resources to best support students in this process. Students learned about specific requirements and guidelines required for obtaining the employment authorization. Renee Liang and Brittney Sneed, from the Career Readiness and Job Placement Hub, shared valuable information about their services which provide students with integral resources and support in job placement, and readiness to meet their career and employment goals. Additionally, Carlos Romero, International Student Counselor, discussed a virtual internship program that is available through the Summer Global Internship program.

This ISP March workshop is a series of three sessions. Look out for the next session on March 16, at 4pm (California time) focusing on tips on creating an American resume. The last session will be held on March 23, at 4pm (California time)

focusing on a roundtable hearing from current ISP students' experiences attaining employment. If you are interested in learning more about future ISP programs and events, contact ISP office at [skyinternational@smccd.edu](mailto:skyinternational@smccd.edu)

*Article by Adrienne Villegas*

## **TRANSFER STUDENT PANEL: STUDENTS BREAKING BARRIERS!!**



The Transfer Center hosted, "Student Breaking Barriers," a virtual student alumni panel. Attendees got the opportunity to hear from three phenomenal alumni- Chantel Giner, a Psychology major in her final semester at San Francisco State, Briana Miranda a Psychological Science major in her second quarter at UC Irvine, and Manuel 'Manny' Verdin a Criminal Justice major in his last semester at San Francisco State. The panelist shared narratives of their educational experiences that inspired and motivated the audience. The conversation centered around ways in which Skyline helped them prepare for transfer and their future careers, advice they had for students considering transfer, and the importance of using different resources.

Each panelist shared their rich experiences at each of their campuses, but what was most apparent was their desire to give back to Skyline because of the relationships they built. Manny Verdin highlighted the difference he sees between institutions stating that Skyline provided him with a strong support system a, "close knit community...[with] a lot of resources and a lot of people reaching out to you," highlighting that at the university, "it's a bigger environment so there's more people...it's a little bit harder to keep track of everyone, so you kind of have to search out those opportunities and resources for yourself." Briana Miranda reminded students that they did not have to

## BOARD REPORT | MARCH 24, 2021

---

do things on their own sharing that the educational journey, "doesn't have to be a lonely journey." This sentiment was shared by all three panelists. It was CIPHER alum, Chantel Giner that continued to motivate students by reminding them to, "set a goal for yourself, it is attainable as long as you put the hard work into it. Even if it is a path that has never been taken before in your family."

Overall the transfer panel was an inspirational experience and would not have been possible without the support of over 30 students, faculty and staff in attendance. A special note of appreciation to Rolando Mutul, Transfer Center Ambassador, who brought the alumni together to share their unique college journey. The Transfer Center is appreciative of the continued support that allows us to create spaces for students to share their experiences. If you were unable to catch the event you can watch the recording [here](#).

*Article by Jackie Flores & Lucy Jovel*