



PRESIDENT'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The President's Monthly Report to the Board of Trustees, Campus, and Community

SBVC Spring Opening Day Sets the Tone for a Successful Semester



San Bernardino Valley College kicked off the spring semester of its centennial year January 16 with a festive opening day ceremony featuring music from Taiko Mix, photo ops, prize giveaways, and a special sweatshirt to mark the occasion.

"As we celebrate our centennial, it's worth remembering and sharing with the world that San Bernardino Valley College is the model for the vision and promise of a community college education," SBVC President Gilbert J. Contreras told faculty and staff gathered in the auditorium.

San Bernardino Community College District Chancellor Diana Z. Rodriguez shared community feedback on the district, including particularly high marks for affordability and skilled trades. "Our community absolutely values you, appreciates you, the education and the care that you are providing the students and the broader community," she said.

Vice President of Administrative Services Keith Bacon gave updates on the construction of the Student Services, Health Sciences, Aeronautics, and Welding buildings and Academic Senate President Andrea Hecht emphasized the importance of hope in the current environment.

"Hope means creating classes and spaces where students feel seen and heard, it means normalizing conversations about mental health, teaching critical thinking about technology and media, and building genuine community," she said. "We're not just teaching, we're giving them tools and showing them that even in uncertain times, we can take action."

The event focused on the future, but also celebrated milestones from Fall 2025. Contreras recognized the Black-Serving Institution task force's work in receiving the official state designation and honored three athletic trainers — Keith Candelaria, Edgar Ortiz, and Christina Acevedo — who saved the life of football player during a medical emergency.

After remarks in the auditorium, attendees enjoyed brunch and a dynamic drum performance by Taiko Mix.

Campus Spotlight:

Destiny Melendez Shines On and Off the Basketball Court



Destiny Melendez is always trying to shoot higher. A guard/forward for San Bernardino Valley College's women's basketball team, Melendez is often the first one in the gym on game days taking shots. It has paid off — in the last week of January she was tied for 11th in the state for scoring and third in the Inland Empire Athletic Conference, with an average of 19.2 points per game.

"I make some goals for each game for what I could do better," she said. "I had 32 points ... my next goal is to be a top scorer and get 42 points, and overall consistently have 20 points a game. I trust all the work I put in and let it show."

Melendez played for Wilmer Amina Carter High School in Rialto and made varsity her sophomore year. She found something she was good at and felt she could play at the collegiate level, and was drawn to SBVC by its coaching, environment, and closeness to home. Now, she wants others to see that they can accomplish the same things she has.

"I appreciate Destiny's commitment to being a well-rounded student-athlete," said Coach Julia Smith. "She excels in the classroom and on the court." Melendez's greatest attribute is her selflessness, Smith continued, as she "genuinely cares about her teammates and continues to make sacrifices to benefit the SBVC women's basketball family."

Melendez, a nursing major who plans to transfer to a four-year university, said she appreciates the supportive people at SBVC and the resources they've offered, particularly the EOPS program. Looking ahead, she hopes to have a "great two to three years at a university and have fun," she said.

Convocation Week

Helps SBVC Faculty and Staff Gear Up for Spring

During Convocation Week January 13-16, the San Bernardino Valley College community prepared for the spring semester by attending movie- and pop culture-themed information sessions created by the Professional Development Committee.

Although Convocation is faculty driven, all SBVC employees were welcome, EOPS Counselor and Professional Development Committee Chair Keenan Giles said. "It was an opportunity to socialize and network and fellowship for all faculty and staff," he added. "That's why we made it inclusive, particularly because of the work we do with the students."

Some sessions were virtual and included San Bernardino Community College District and Crafton Hills College collaborations, while others were held in person with departments, divisions, task forces, work groups, and committees, "so people could see those things in action," Giles said. The week ended with Opening Day activities and meetings.

Convocation sessions were aimed at giving context for shared/participatory governance at SBVC, building a foundation to set priorities, and providing valuable information and access to resources for new faculty members. Conversations connected to each person's role and work, said Giles, who led Convocation Week planning for the first time.

"It was a lot of work, but I can see the successes and I can see the areas that might need to be improved," he said, emphasizing that Convocation Week was a committee-wide effort.

SBVC Vice President of Instruction Leticia Hector appreciated watching Giles and the 15-person committee "plan a Convocation Week that truly inspired and energized faculty, in preparation of the new semester," said. "I look forward to continuing to work alongside our faculty as we celebrate our Centennial."

SBVC Explores Vision for Multicultural Center



San Bernardino Valley College is collaborating with Inspire School Services and Dr. Keenon Mitchell to advance the vision and implementation of the San Bernardino Valley College Multicultural Center.

In January, Dr. Mitchell facilitated an initial meeting with President's Executive Cabinet and members of Academic Senate leadership.

He laid out a robust agenda to engage campus leadership, constituent groups, and affinity groups as SBVC defines the focus of its Multicultural Center.

SBVC leadership will work with the campus community to help transition cultural programming from the affinity groups to the college as well as design appropriate staffing, services, and deliverables for the center.

The SBVC College Council will provide updates as the work progresses.



Pell Grant Support Increases for Students

San Bernardino Valley College's financial aid team continues to "advance community" and expand "opportunities for all."

SBVC increased the number of students receiving financial aid, with incredible improvements seen in Fall 2025 and continued success in Spring 2026.

Spring 2026 Pell Grant disbursements increased by more than 22%, serving 23% more students than Spring 2025, and resulting in over \$3.6 million awarded to 3,301 students.

This growth reflects the college's commitment to expanding access to financial aid. This effort is led by Interim Director, Rosario Esparza and classified professionals in Financial Aid, and is a great success for SBVC's Valley Up Initiative and Student-Centered Funding Formula.

SBVC President Dr. Contreras Named CEO Fellow at Wheelhouse

Last fall, San Bernardino Valley College President Dr. Gilbert J. Contreras was invited to participate as a CEO Fellow in the 2026 Institute on Leadership at Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership and Research.

Based at the University of California, Davis, School of Education, Wheelhouse supports and strengthens leadership and practice in the California Community Colleges system through independent research and an institute designed for community college CEOs.

Wheelhouse assembles a cohort of 15-20 community college CEOs each year to learn and network.

"I look forward to exploring adaptive, student-centered leadership, strategic communications, and leadership theory and application during my time in the program," Contreras said.



CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

Lois Carson



Hall of Fame Alumna Lois Carson

Distinguished alumna Lois Carson's legacy lives on at SBVC. A trailblazer in education, San Bernardino Valley College alumna Lois Carson made history throughout her lifetime, including as the first person of color elected to the San Bernardino Community College District (SBCCD) Board of Trustees.

Learning was always important to Carson, and the Memphis native graduated as valedictorian from St. Augustine Catholic High School. She moved west with her husband of 55 years, Harry Carson, and they settled in the Inland Empire, where they raised their six children. Ready to continue her studies, she enrolled in classes at SBVC, and found the college "met my need at a critical time as a foundation to my education," she said during an interview with the SBVC Foundation.

After graduating in 1965, Carson went on to earn her bachelor's degree in English from Cal State San Bernardino and two master's degrees — one in English, the other in Education — from UC Riverside. When she joined the SBCCD Board of Trustees in 1973, it marked the start of an impressive 24-year tenure that saw Carson serve two terms as president. She was a strong advocate for EOPS, campus childcare, and transfer centers, and worked to ensure all students felt welcome. "The community college is truly the people's college," she said.

Carson additionally had a storied 30-year career as executive director of the Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Riverside County, which led to her twice being named Riverside County Administrator of the Year and receiving the 2007 Lyndon Baines Johnson Human Services Award for her work assisting lower-income families. She was also inducted into the SBVC Alumni Hall of Fame in 1997 and named Woman of the Year in California's 62nd District by Assemblymember Wilmer Amina Carter, another SBVC alumna.

Following Carson's death in 2021, shortly after her 90th birthday, her legacy was cemented when SBVC renamed the Campus Center in her honor to Lois Carson Campus Center. Now, when students pass by the building or come inside, they will be reminded of this powerhouse mentor and advocate whose hard work and dedication shaped the college they attend today.

100 Centennial Events

FEB
18

Lunar New Year Celebration

Art Gallery
12 PM

MAR
20

Health Science and Aeronautics Building Groundbreaking

TBA

FEB
20

Student Services Building Topping Off Ceremony

TBA

MAR
27

Centennial Gala

Kinesiology & Athletics Complex
5 PM

FEB
21

Black Art Expo

Art Gallery
4 PM



Check out SBVC's Centennial Moments on YouTube!

We're capturing SBVC's 100th year through stories, highlights, and campus moments.