



PRESIDENT'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

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

SBVC Welcomes End of Centennial Year



San Bernardino Valley College concluded its centennial year and launched the Fall 2026 semester with a celebratory Opening Day featuring the Pacific High School Marching Band, Middle College High School cheerleaders, and a panel of neighboring school district superintendents.

Faculty, staff, students, and community leaders processed from the Lois Carson Campus Center to the SBVC Auditorium, following a walkway freshly painted with facts about each of the campus's 100 years. The gathering in the Auditorium celebrated the centennial, which started a year ago, and looked ahead to another century of serving the community.



"For more than 100 years, advancing community is part of who we are as a community institution, and advancing community is our guiding principle in our Valley Up! initiative," said SBVC President Gilbert J. Contreras.

In his State of the College, Contreras highlighted SBVC's record enrollment and graduates in the 2025-26 academic year, record disbursement of financial aid and scholarships, and community partnerships. While higher education institutions are concerned about what has been termed the enrollment cliff, "we are focusing on our students, our employees and the communities that define our college," he said.



Vice President of Administrative Services Keith Bacon also gave updates on the construction of the student services, health sciences, aeronautics, and welding buildings before Contreras led an advancing community panel of superintendents from the Colton, Rialto and San Bernardino school districts.

SBVC Welcomes 8,000 Visitors at Back to School Extravaganza

More than 8,000 people came to campus on July 17 for the San Bernardino City Unified School District's annual Back to School Extravaganza. Families took home backpacks, school supplies, and information on available educational services.

San Bernardino Valley College has hosted the event for the last three years, showing its commitment to serving the region.

"We are excited to continue this longstanding collaboration with SBCUSD and our community partners to support local families and create opportunities for student success," said SBVC Dean of Student Equity and Success Maria Del Carmen Rodriguez.

SBCUSD Superintendent Mauricio Arellano expressed his gratitude for the district's partnership with the college.

"Seeing thousands of students and families come together as we prepared for a new school year was a wonderful reminder of what we can accomplish when our community works together to support our students," he said. "These partnerships help ensure our students have the resources, opportunities, and encouragement they need to start the school year ready to learn and succeed."

Dozens of groups and organizations set up tables on the football field, passing out information to interested visitors on community and educational resources. SBVC participants included Counseling, the Dreamers Resource Center, Puente, EOPS/CARE, Umoja/Tumaini, Enrollment Services, Outreach and Recruitment, Human Services, Computer Technology Services, and Maintenance.



Applied AI, Arts Administration Among New Programs at SBVC

Several new programs will be offered at San Bernardino Valley College for the 2026-27 academic year, including one focused on meeting the demand for artificial intelligence skills.

The Gallery Management Certificate track teaches exhibition development and programming, management, and leadership. Six courses explore arts administration, marketing, cultural policy, global art markets, museum and gallery practices, and community engagement, and provide a hands-on practicum.

The Associate of Science Degree in Applied Artificial Intelligence program introduces students to the concepts, tools, and techniques that drive AI applications. It provides a foundation in computer science and hands-on experience with machine learning, natural language processing, data analysis, and automation. Students will learn how AI is applied in various fields.

The Artificial Intelligence Certificate provides an understanding of AI and its applications in various fields, such as natural language processing, computer vision, robotics, and data analysis. Courses cover the fundamentals of AI and provide hands-on experience with AI tools and technologies, along with its ethical and social implications.



SBVC Students Qualify for Medi-Cal, CalFresh Through Unique Partnership

San Bernardino Valley College and the Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) have joined forces for a first-of-its-kind collaboration that allows students to qualify for Medi-Cal and CalFresh.

"We're honored to be the first community college in the state to leverage this partnership to support our students with health care and nutrition services," said Dean of Student Services Dr. Ray Carlos.

Launched in March 2025 as the Inland Empire Equitable Healthcare Access Demonstration Project, IEHP works with the San Bernardino Community College District and other community colleges in San Bernardino and Riverside counties to connect students to health care services and CalFresh programs.

"College students will shape the future of the Inland Empire. Equitable health care and nutritious food are basic necessities that can empower them to create lasting, positive change in their communities," said IEHP Chief Executive Officer Jarrod McNaughton. "We are deeply proud of our partnership with California Community Colleges and remain committed to fulfilling our promise to help build a healthier, happier region."

New SBVC Programs Eligible for Federal Financial Aid

San Bernardino Valley College's new programs, including its Bachelor's Degree in Water Resources Management, can now participate in federal financial aid programs.

The U.S. Department of Education approved SBVC's Program Participation Agreement update, making the programs eligible for Title IV financial aid. In addition to the bachelor's degree, the Title IV approval extends to five new certificate programs and credit hours for six existing certificate programs.

"This approval is an important milestone for the college and ensures that eligible students enrolled in these approved programs may now receive federal financial aid," said SBVC Director of Financial Aid Rosario Esparza.

The Bachelor's in Water Resources Management has already demonstrated success, with the first cohort filling up before the first week of classes.

SBVC Students Runners-Up for Mayors Cyber Cup

A team of 13 San Bernardino Valley College cybersecurity students won second place in the Inland Empire Mayors Cyber Cup competition this spring.

Sean Abaniel, Adan Albacazares, Chris Bosman, Tyrone Candler, Prinz Cerezo, Julien Cervantez, Christopher Earl, Matthew Le, Curtis Loop, Vinh Khang Nguyen Pham, Alyssa Puentes, Taufan Tenisi, and Michelle Umali worked together to solve cybersecurity challenges that tested their problem solving and technical skills, teamwork, and ability to think under pressure. They analyzed security problems, responded to technical challenges, communicated as a team, and made decisions together, according to Computer Information Systems Professor Sam Addington.

"This was a meaningful achievement for our students and for San Bernardino Valley College because the competition gave them an opportunity to apply their cybersecurity knowledge in a real-world, team-based environment," he said.

The students were presented with medals at a ceremony on campus in May.

"I am very proud of the students because they showed dedication, professionalism, and strong teamwork throughout the competition," Addington said. "Their second-place finish reflects not only their technical ability, but also their commitment to learning and growing in the cybersecurity field."

Organized by the Inland Economic Growth and Opportunity Collaborative, the competition develops cybersecurity talent in the region. This year's Mayors Cyber Cup drew teams from 20 high schools, six middle schools, and four colleges.

CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

Chris Clarke



Chris Clarke at SBVC's observatory.

Chris Clarke is known for his many presentations on the galaxy and solar system at San Bernardino Valley College. But he also played a much more locally focused role: preserving a century of SBVC history.

As new buildings replaced older ones, Clarke, who worked at SBVC from 1977 to 2017 and ran the Planetarium and N.A. Richardson Observatory, learned that the campus' wrought-iron gates, brass plaques, desks, and science equipment might be scrapped.

"At the time there was very little I knew of that was being saved, and I thought it was tragic," Clarke said.

He talked to maintenance workers, and with the help of colleagues put the items, some of which dated back to the 1930s, in storage. When the Observatory had space available in 2011, Clarke turned it into a museum. No one knew the Observatory like he did, and Clarke also put together a booklet sharing its history.

In his role as SBVC's guide to the stars, Clarke's programing brought more community members to campus than most traditional outreach efforts — over the years, he connected more than 60,000 people to the heavens. Clarke said he took the motto of his hero N.A. Richardson, the Observatory's namesake and one of the college's founders, to heart: "Work hard, and love your work."

Internship Gives SBVC Student Opportunity to Help Construct Student Services Building



Fabiola Forli Venegas, pictured on the right, on the construction site of the new Student Services Building.

Fabiola Forli Venegas can say she literally helped build San Bernardino Valley College. She spent two summers interning with McCarthy Building Companies, which is constructing SBVC's Student Services Building, slated for completion in Spring 2027. She watched as walls and the roof went up and plumbing and electricity were installed.

"It was beautiful to see how the building was developing from design," said Forli Venegas, who is two classes from her associate's degree in architecture and environmental design and has transferred to Cal Poly Pomona to study landscape architecture.

Her journey to SBVC started in Venezuela, where she worked and took management classes. She moved to Yucaipa with her family in 2015, and in 2022 decided to go back to school to study "something I can do remotely." It was difficult at first because "I was the older one," but her fellow students were patient and helpful. She joined the construction management club, received scholarships, and made the Fall 2025 Dean's List.

A professor connected her with the McCarthy internship, and she worked on the Student Services Building's pre-construction phase in summer 2025. A year later, McCarthy asked her to return for another internship, which had her focus on mockups, safety, design, and scheduling.

Looking back, Forli Venegas "can't be more grateful to San Bernardino Valley College," she said. "I recommend to any person who wants to improve their education, is a parent, or has experience in working, to come here. They guide you."