

Student Equity + MCEC

2024-2025 AT A GLANCE

What a Year!

This academic year has been filled with new experiences, exciting opportunities and many events and activities to engage with one another. As the year comes to a close, we would like to share some highlights with you all!

GCC's Student Equity Department and the Multicultural & Community Engagement Center (MCEC) Unite!

This year, two departments that have long shared a mission to advance equity and celebrate diversity merged together. The Student Equity Department and the MCEC came together under one management. By combining resources and leadership, we aim to streamline services between the two areas, enhance our programming efforts, and strengthen our support to students. We will continue our commitment to ensure that every student we serve feels seen, heard, and supported.

Between our two areas, we house the following programs and support services:

- Dream Resource Center (DRC)
- Pride Center
- UPLIFT Peer Mentoring Program
- Estudiantes Unidos
- Rising Scholars Learning Community
- Black Scholars Learning Community
- La Comunidad Learning Community
- APIDA Learning Community
- Cultural Diversity Program

Like any transition, this merger has been filled with a lot of reflection, required flexibility and team effort, and continues to challenge us to do better for our students. We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish so far, and are excited about our future together.



Student Spotlight!

Join us in congratulating **Winnie Ann Masaoy** from our APIDA learning community! Winnie began her educational journey at GCC in 2023, and overcame her shyness by taking advantage of all the opportunities available to her at GCC. She has participated in the Go Baby Go Team Internship program, a Healthcare Professions internship, was the marketing director of the Pre-Nursing Club, member of the Filipino American Student Association (FASA), and was a supplemental instructor leader for physiology. Through all of her engagement, she found support, encouragement, and developed lasting friendships. Winnie shared that that the APIDA learning community felt like a second home to her as she navigated her first year in college, stating that one of her biggest supporters was “**Kuya Kevin**”, and no matter how small her accomplishments may have seemed to her, Kevin always cheered her on. Winnie has been admitted to the **Bachelor of Nursing program at CSULA!** This is a huge accomplishment and is a testament to her dedication. We are extremely proud and honored to have been part of her educational journey at GCC. Congratulations, Winnie!

When asked what words she would like to share with other students and the GCC community, Winnie shared the following:

“Whatever background you’re coming from and whatever struggles you’ve had or are currently going through, you will not have a hard time finding people to support you at GCC, especially once you find a community you feel a sense of belonging in. If you ever feel too shy to try something new, imagine your younger self. We all start as social butterflies when we’re young, starting from when we stumble across new friends in the playground. We’re built to be curious and stay curious. If you say no to yourself now, you would be depriving that younger version of the same opportunity. So, for your younger version’s sake, say yes!”



Students of Distinction

This year **SIX** out of the ten finalists for Student of Distinction are from our learning communities. Congratulations to **Sosie Berg** (Black Scholars), **Alberto Huerta** (La Comunidad), **Carlos Matute Pacheco** (La Comunidad), **Brian Trivino** (La Comunidad & Rising Scholars), **Alisa Yenokyan** (Rising Scholars), and **Alejandro Zamaripa** (La Comunidad). This prestigious award acknowledges students that not only excel academically, but who are committed to their leadership and service to our college community. We are extremely proud of them. They are all amazing and deserving of this special honor!

This year's **J. Walter Smith Student of the Year Award** recipient was our very own **Carlos Matute Pacheco**. Pacheco is an outstanding student, heavily involved on campus, an exemplary leader and advocate, and is a dedicated and passionate individual. Pacheco is transferring to **UC San Diego** as an International Relations major.

Alejandro Zamaripa was selected to be this year's **commencement speaker!** Alejandro is the kind of student every educator hopes to cross paths with. He is sharp, hardworking, humble, resilient and an exemplary servant leader. He is transferring to the **University of Southern California** as a Political Science/Pre-Law major! We are extremely proud of all of our students, and are so excited to see their growth, their leadership, and their commitment to helping the campus community. They are a collective powerhouse and are going to make a difference in their perspective universities and future careers. Congratulations!



Carlos Matute Pacheco



Alejandro Zamaripa

Black Educator Excellence Award

Alexandra Evans, student equity adjunct counselor and social science adjunct faculty, was the recipients of the 1st annual **Black Educators Excellence (BEE) Award!** This award is hosted by The African American California Community College Trustees and Administrators Black Caucus, and it honors Black educators and professionals within the California Community College system who continuously uplift the Black community through leadership, innovation, and a deep commitment to equity.

Alexandra is also currently serving as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) resource member for the Curriculum & Instruction committee (C&I) and is the co-advisor for the Black Student Union (BSU). Alexandra cares deeply for the students she serves, goes above and beyond in her work, and has been instrumental to the great work being done through the Black Scholars learning community. Congratulations Alexandra!



Student Conferences

This year, it was our privilege to take students to two different conferences. We took six students to the **7th Annual Men of Color Action Network (MOCAN) conference**. This year's theme was about elevating diverse masculinity, and the conference provided an opportunity for students and professionals to engage in powerful discussions and participate in workshops to engage in dialogue and learn from one another. This conference is powerful because it provides a unique opportunity for folks to connect with like-minded individuals and be part a part of a supportive community. One of our students **Nicolas Lopez**, was selected as a scholarship recipient that was offered through this conference. They announced the winners there and we were able to celebrate with him. It was a great moment for us all.

We also took four students to the **African American Male Education Network & Development (A²MEND) summit**, a nonprofit composed of educators, who voluntarily use their professional expertise to operate a statewide mentoring program for Black male college students. This year's theme, "Standing on Business: Operating with Excellence in Engaging and Serving Black Males", highlighted the importance of re-establishing black male success in the community college and their presence in the community as a whole.

Experiences such as these are invaluable and we hope to continue supporting students and offering these types of opportunities for as long as possible.



University Tours

One of the most rewarding experiences for students is having the opportunity to visit universities where they explore their transfer options, engage with campus community members at those schools, and hone in on their educational goals. This year we visited **CSU Long Beach**. We also coordinated our annual Southern California University Tour, where we visited **CSU Fullerton, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and San Diego State** over three days. This trip allowed the opportunity for participants to explore the various campuses, ask questions directly to admission folks, and engage with the surrounding community by exploring areas such as **Old Town San Diego** and **Embarcadero**.



We also offered our **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)** tour this spring. Students visited schools such as **Morris Brown College, Clark Atlanta University, Alabama State University, Miles College, and Tuskegee University**. This tour also included sightseeing, museum visits, and historical stops, including the **Rosa Parks Museum and Civil Rights Memorial Center** in Alabama, **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Historical Park**, and **International Civil Rights Walk of Fame** in Georgia.



UPLIFT Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program

The UPLIFT Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Program is designed to support first-year students as they adjust to college life. This spring, 26 UPLIFT mentors dedicated their time to welcome and guide their peers through the challenges of starting college. Through one-on-one meetings, group activities, and ongoing encouragement, the mentors created a space where new students could feel supported, understood, and more comfortable on campus. Mentees shared how much it meant to have someone they could turn to, whether it was learning about campus resources, getting involved on campus, or simply having someone who would listen. Mentors, in turn, found the experience rewarding and meaningful, helping them grow personally while strengthening their connection to the college community. Programs like UPLIFT show just how powerful peer support can be and the impact it can have on the new student experience.



Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to all of the APIDA, Black Scholars, La Comunidad, and Rising Scholars students who were recipients of scholarships this year!

Thanks to the Glendale College Guild and their generosity, **Angel Moran**, **Billi Sarafina**, and **Winnie Ann Masaoy** received the Guild Scholarships this year. These students were selected for their active involvement and exemplary accomplishments at GCC, and they were recognized during the last Spring 2025 Guild meeting.

In addition, **Imprezz Pressley**, **Molly Olson**, **Billi Sarafina**, **Andrew Tibbs**, and **Victoria Lee** received the Black Scholars scholarship, and **Carolina Leyva** was awarded the Rising Scholars scholarship. You are all amazing and are well-deserving of the scholarships you were awarded. Congratulations!



Estudiantes Unidos

Estudiantes Unidos is a program that offers opportunities for real dialogue between GCC leaders and the students in the program. Students learn about the challenges and strengths of the college, are encouraged to think of gaps that can help their peers, and they advocate and implement a project of their choosing to fill that gap in support of their peers and future GCC students. This year, Estudiantes Unidos implemented a Multicultural Fiesta in an effort to highlight various Hispanic cultures and traditions, representative of different countries. Their dedication to this project resulted in a powerful celebration of culture, identity, and community. With over 150 people in attendance, the event was filled with food, music, joy, connection and information on different Latin American countries.



Learning Communities

The learning communities provide specialized academic counseling and programming that aim to create a sense of belonging and community, and helps students build genuine connections with one another and the campus at large. Our four learning communities, **APIDA**, **Black Scholars**, **Rising Scholars**, and **La Comunidad**, continue to provide opportunities for students to engage with one another through social mixers, such as game board days and video game nights, learning community group meetings, and our fan favorite, the taco and tostada bars!

This year, we offered various opportunities for student engagement, such as a **Chinatown Walking tour**, a **Yakult Factory tour**, academic workshops, an End-of-the-Year Celebration, a **spicy ramen challenge**, and much more! All of these opportunities are meant to build community, enhance engagement, and create a lasting impact on our students.

This year, over **100** learning community students are **graduating and/or transferring!** We provided cap and gowns, and graduation sashes to each. As students came to the office to pick up their regalia, we cheered for and celebrated each and every one of them.

In addition, we are excited to share that three Black Scholar students, **Tariq Carr**, **Johnnie Reed**, and **Melvin Knox**, were recruited as athletes to **Arizona Christian University!** This year has been filled with many accomplishments for our students, and we are extremely proud of them. We are excited to continue growing our programming and seeing our students accomplish their goals!



Cultural Diversity

Carla Ruiz, our Cultural Diversity Coordinator, has continued to bring amazing programming that aims to be responsive to current events, student needs, celebrate culture and diversity, and recognize and value what we all bring to our communities.

This year, GCC, in collaboration with the **San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleño/Tongva**, presented the college's **Land Acknowledgement**. A blessing ceremony was performed by **Chief Anthony Redblood Morales** and **Andrew Guiding Young Cloud Morales**. This blessing was meaningful for the college, as it reflected on the land and the tribe.



Land Acknowledgement Ceremony

In addition, in November of 2024, GCC's Board of Trustees passed **resolution No. 16**, which solidified our Land Acknowledgement and our commitment to a collaborative allyship and partnership with the Gabrieleño/Tongva tribe. If you are interested in getting more involved or joining one of the planning committees, please check out our website.



Dia De Los Muertos



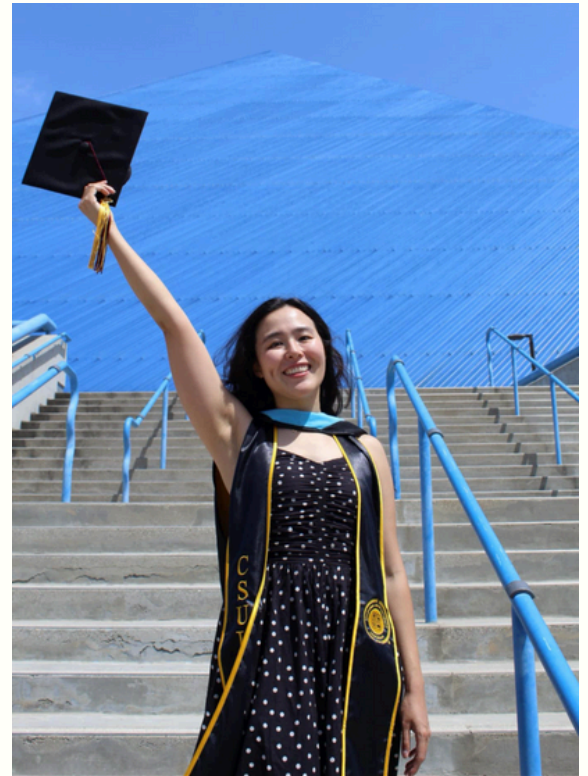
Pride Week 2025 Drag Show

Thank You to our Intern!

Congratulations to our academic counseling intern **Rachel Tat**! She recently earned her Masters in Counseling, Student Development and Higher Education, from California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). Rachel was placed in the Student Equity Department this year, through GCC's Graduate Counseling Internship Program, which offers hands-on-experience to aspiring counselors.

Rachel attended UCLA for undergraduate, where she majored in Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology. Her experiences at UCLA influenced her career trajectory as she steered towards higher education. She shares the following: “The reason I’m in this field is because I struggled a lot in my first few years at UCLA, not knowing what I was doing as a first-generation college student and feeling completely lost, confused, and alone. My experiences with those struggles and overcoming them is what led me to pursue a career in higher education – so I can help students avoid those struggles or at least have an easier time through them. I feel so grateful to have been able to do just that in spaces like La Comunidad, where I’ve grown so much and had such amazing experiences that I will treasure as I move forward in my career. Thank you Student Equity and Jamie for all your support - I’m so excited for what the future holds for us all!”

Rachel has been an asset to our team, and has been able to provide support and guidance in her capacity as an intern. We are so proud of Rachel and have no doubt that she will make a positive impact on all the students she works with!



Thank You !

We had an amazing year, and we look forward to what the future holds!

- Student Equity and MCEC

