



# HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

FROM HIGH SCHOOL to GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE and BEYOND

## Discover Your Pathway...

Glendale Community College is a place of discovery where students can learn a great deal about the world around them and even more about themselves. The college provides opportunities for students to explore their interests while serving as a passport, unlocking doors along the path to further education and fulfilling careers.

As a high school student, you may have already developed a passion for a particular subject or field, or perhaps you're still unsure what you'd like to do with your future. Either way, GCC can be your best "next step" toward defining and achieving your goals.

Inside, you'll find stories about students who came to GCC for a variety of reasons, but they all have something in common: GCC turned out to be a vital step on their pathway to success.

If you'd like to know more about GCC, Student Outreach Services (SOS) is here to help. Call SOS: **(818) 240-1000 ext. 4-SOS (4767)** or visit our web site: [www.glendale.edu/sos](http://www.glendale.edu/sos)

...to Exciting,  
Fulfilling Careers

...to Real-World,  
Technical Job Skills

## ...to Success at GCC!

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...to the University  
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# Please Mr. Postman

talking transfer

Spring is a busy season for most students and their families with graduations and end-of-year activities filling their calendars. For community college students who are preparing to transfer to universities, it also marks a rite of passage that can be both nerve-racking and exhilarating. As the classic Motown song relates, waiting for the postman to deliver a letter that's pivotal to your hopes and dreams is stressful, but it's not a handwritten note from a faraway sweetheart that the students anticipate. Instead, they await official notices typed on university letterhead that will enable them to begin whole new chapters in their lives.

"Most days this spring I had classes until about 10:00 p.m. and my dad usually gave me rides home," explained Menua Massihi, a GCC sophomore. "When I got in the car one night, he handed me a large envelope from the University of Delaware. He had been anxiously holding it all day, waiting for me to open it. He wasn't disappointed; it was an acceptance letter!"

Like most transfer students, Menua applied to several schools with the hope of being admitted to his first choice while including others as "safety" options. Vanderbilt University is Menua's preference, but he has been put on a wait list there.

**Transfer students need to have multiple options** and those planning to attend a University of California or California State University school can get a leg up with a Transfer Admission Guarantee, or TAG. "You definitely want to do the TAGs," explained Kevin Meza, Counselor and Transfer Center Coordinator at Glendale Community College. "Up until a few years ago the TAGs didn't carry a lot of weight because students were getting into schools anyway. But now TAGs really matter, where a student without a TAG might be denied admission and a student with a TAG will get in, even though they have the same grade point average. It's a guarantee. It's not an 'if,' it's a guarantee."

**The Transfer Center at GCC is a great place to learn about TAG requirements** and keep up to date on any changes. "I've been counseling at GCC for ten years and at the college level for nearly twenty. In this past year there have been the greatest changes I've ever seen in California education," said Meza. "Students really need to be aware of what's happening in admissions; at least once a semester they should come in and check with their counselor. A student may think they're meeting all the requirements, but they are changing so often and sometimes at the last minute," he warned.

Other than TAGs, the best advice a counselor can give a transfer student is to complete their English and math courses as early as possible. Those seem to be the biggest challenges for new college students—particularly the math—and it can possibly delay transferring by a year or even two.

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—Kevin Meza, GCC Counselor.

**High school juniors and seniors who want to get ahead** don't have to wait for graduation to begin their college careers. With the Jump Start program, qualified students can take college credit classes at GCC while they're still in high school. "When I graduated from Glendale High, I had already earned 12 units through Jump Start and the classes I took helped me choose my major," said Rochelle Shabanian. After becoming a full-time student at GCC, Rochelle was accepted to the Scholars Program which qualified her for priority admission to several prestigious universities. Now, two years later, she has received acceptance letters from UCLA, UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and UC Berkeley. "I chose UCLA because they have an amazing psychology program, one of the best in the country," she said.

Eighteen year-old Loren Toomian is on an even faster track to the school of her dreams. At the end of her tenth grade year she took the High School Proficiency Exam and started a full-time schedule at GCC the next fall. "It wasn't that I didn't like high school," she explained, "I just wanted to be in college. I wanted a change. I'll be entering UCLA as a junior while most people my age are just starting, so it worked out well for me. I think it's smart to transfer; you save a lot of money and GCC is a good transitional step between high school and a university."

Loren was also accepted to UCSB and UC Irvine, but UCLA has always been her ultimate goal. "The transfer process has gone very smoothly," she said. "My counselor made things very clear for me. He laid out a plan and I didn't have any trouble at all following it."

Of course, not everyone will be able to fulfill their transfer dreams so smoothly. Menua Massihi eventually heard from Vanderbilt that they are full; he didn't get in. In the meantime, he's made travel plans to attend his orientation at the University of Delaware. "It's really competitive and I'm happy to have been admitted," he said.

**In California, four-year schools have fewer spaces available** to award to increasing numbers of applicants. "The public universities are purposely trying to reduce their numbers of students for the first time ever," explained Meza. "It's all due to the economy and budget cuts. Up until now, the tradition has been to try to provide an education to every person, but these are historic times and they're eliminating that. Students need to have a multi-pronged approach to college admissions now," he said.

"The way I look at it, we have to work together," Meza continued. "You tell me what you're interested in, I suggest some strategies, and we follow up with each other. Essentially, we want to package you as a qualified, competitive applicant to these schools. When we both do our part, it's still possible to achieve your educational goals."

Seated left to right, transfer students Rochelle Shabanian, Menua Massihi and Loren Toomian join Kevin Meza (standing) in the Glendale Community College Transfer Center.



## From GCC to Washington DC

One of the primary missions of Glendale Community College is preparing students to transfer to four-year universities, but that's only part of the greater goal of helping students succeed. While the definition of student success can be many things to many people, it usually includes achieving personal growth, overcoming challenges, and securing a fulfilling career.

Students often come to GCC without clear goals in mind, but the time they invest here ends up shaping the course of their entire lives. "No family member in my parents' or grandparents' generation had attended college, so I really didn't see how it would help me," recalled Teresa Neven, now a Senior Information Technology Analyst for the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in Washington, DC. "I was happily working at a supermarket when my dad told me that I'd either have to enroll in college or start paying rent. I quickly calculated it would be cheaper to take a few classes," she said.

"My experience at GCC started out quite dull," Teresa continued. I was basically attending to avoid paying rent at home and just signed up for classes that I thought sounded good. It was only after I met with one of the counselors, Dr. Joe Puglia, that I developed a sense of direction for what I was doing. After convincing me to work toward an Associate's Degree and prepare to transfer, he encouraged me to sign up for ASGCC [student government]. He greatly influenced my ability to succeed at GCC and my future career decisions as well."

**By participating in ASGCC,** Teresa learned about government, leadership, administration, management, public service and even herself. "My association with ASGCC students and advisors helped me realize that I needed a more focused plan for my future and career," said Teresa. "The ASGCC advisors showed me that the most important aspect of my future was thinking about who I was and building a good understanding of my own character. They taught valuable concepts such as integrity, honor and respect for others," she said.

“GCC provided me the experience of a lifetime to grow and mature as a young adult.” —Teresa Neven, Senior IT Analyst for the U.S. GAO.

Teresa transferred from GCC to the public policy and management program at the University of Southern California where she earned a Bachelor's degree. She credits her experience at GCC for the success she had at USC, which in turn led her to earn Master's degrees in both public administration and information management from Syracuse University. She is now on temporary assignment from the GAO to work for the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. "When I was at GCC and participated in student government, I only dreamed of actually working for Congress. Now I do!" she said. "People ask me if I like my job. I always respond 'I don't like it, I love it.'"

**Glendale Community College can be a great start** for those who have yet to find their way, but students who begin with well-formed educational goals and strong support systems have transformative experiences here too. "I have been blessed with an amazing group of mentors, friends, and family who have supported me at every turn, said Daniella Foster, Director of Public-Private Partnerships at the U.S. Department of State. On the advice of one of her high school teachers, Daniella began taking classes at GCC as a Jump Start student at the age of 14. "I had an idea that I wanted to pursue a career in mass media and communications and GCC provided the forum to explore my interests before I committed to a major," she said. "I had an amazing experience and was involved in dance productions and choreography, student newspaper, ASGCC and I worked in the public information office. The leadership and interpersonal skills I honed early on through extracurricular activities have been invaluable to me. My involvement in student government was particularly impactful. I made lifelong friends and learned valuable early lessons in politics that have served me well today," she said.

Daniella went on to Pepperdine University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in intercultural communications and later earned a Master's degree at Georgetown University in public and social policy. "I found that my involvement at GCC was so rich that by the time I transferred, I was super-focused and ready to think about my next steps and the leap into a career," she said.

**There's a common misconception** that completing all four years of a Bachelor's degree at a university is more advantageous than starting at a community college. Of course, the biggest benefits go to those who are able to recognize and exploit opportunities, and at GCC access to these opportunities can be more abundant.

"I always thought I'd start at a four-year institution, but my parents wanted me to avoid student debt and they talked me out of it," explained Jean Schindler, Publications Coordinator for the Congressionally-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington, DC. "Because GCC is smaller than most universities, it was easier to get involved in activities and build a group of friends that spanned campus life," she said.

At GCC, Jean got involved with the Model UN group, she wrote for the campus newspaper and was elected to student government. "While in ASGCC, I became heavily involved in the Measure G campaign, organizing volunteers and presentations,



Teresa Neven, Daniella Foster and Jean Schindler all started college at GCC, went on to earn advanced degrees and now work in Washington DC in various public service positions.

and talking to voters over the phone." Just before transferring to UCLA, Jean was recognized for her involvement at GCC by being named Woman of the Year.

While at UCLA, Jean took a class with former Secretary of State Warren Christopher and did an internship with the U.S. Department of State. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in history and went on to earn a Master's degree in history of international relations from the London School of Economics. She has studied and worked in Hong Kong, China and South Korea. The NED, where she now works, makes grants to organizations around the world that are working to advance democratic principles in their societies. "It's a fascinating job with an organization I really believe in," she said.

**Students come to GCC for many different reasons,** and when they take advantage of everything the school has to offer, there's no limit to how far they can go. "GCC provided me the experience of a lifetime to grow and mature as a young adult," said Teresa, the GAO analyst. "Without the influence of the people there, I may have never fully considered furthering my education and seeking out a career path."

"When I first went to GCC, some of my friends told me it wouldn't lead anywhere, that it would hurt my resume in the future," said Jean Schindler. "This couldn't be further from the truth. I had great professors, I improved my writing, learned how to manage teams and budgets, took part in governance committees, and I learned how to balance work, friends, classes, and extracurricular involvement. My community college experience definitely prepared me for life in the wider world."

# Your route to real-world job skills

career pathways

Opportunities still exist in today's job market for well-trained people with specialized job skills. As far as anyone can predict, society will always need qualified nurses, firefighters and law-enforcement personnel, and Glendale Community College will continue to train them. Additionally, by maintaining close ties to industry, our faculty excels at identifying and teaching the technical skills that employers seek to help elevate their businesses to the next level. "Students are getting hired, but they need to know more than just how or why something is done; they need to be able to do it," said a representative from The Boeing Company at a recent National Teacher Training Workshop, where GCC faculty and other educators convened with industry leaders to advance educational efforts in emerging manufacturing technology.

**Businesses are looking for people** who can think beyond traditional principles in manufacturing and design, so by offering a strong curriculum in engineering drafting, engineering manufacturing, architecture and computer aided drafting (CAD), Glendale Community College is training people to do just that. GCC has positioned itself at the forefront of education in these fields by giving students hands-on experience with state-of-the-art equipment to solve real-world problems along their pathways toward successful careers.

Realizing that two years of community college only makes up a portion of a robust career pathway, GCC has built relationships with area high schools and four-year universities to extend the scope of the college's programs. "There's been a long-term relationship between the Glendale College technical programs

are more likely to connect the dots between education and a successful career. "Everyone is talking about closing the achievement gap, but we seem to be doing it here, and we think it's because of these reality-based programs," said Dall.

**The State of California has established "Industry Sectors"** in order to identify specific fields of interest and guide students, their parents and counselors toward classes that form career pathways. A typical pathway may start in high school where students can take introductory engineering and robotics classes. It continues at GCC, where they can earn a certificate or A.A. degree before entering the workforce. Others may extend their pathway by transferring to a university like CSU Northridge. "We have been partnering with CSUN and their engineering department, so students can seamlessly go from high school to GCC to CSUN to earn their engineering degrees," explained Jan Swinton, Associate Dean of Instructional Services at GCC. "The CSUN electrical engineering program, for example, is in the process of adding renewable and smart grid technologies to their curriculum. They gave us all their lower-division coursework so students can do their freshman and sophomore years here. It's much more efficient for the students," she concluded.

**Students aren't always ready** to begin a career pathway while they're in high school. Vartan Bursalyan spent two semesters taking general education courses

Water and Power. I interviewed and a week later I was hired to complete a large scale drafting project," he said. His work at GWP sparked an interest in engineering, so Vartan added a few engineering classes to his GCC studies. "I'm proud to say I received my Associate in Arts degree from GCC and I'm enrolled at Cal Poly Pomona working on a BA in architecture." Meanwhile, Vartan continues to get hands-on training and field experience through his GWP internship and hopes to advance into a promotional position there.

“It's more than a job. It's in the field I want to be in. . . .It's very rewarding to meet and sometimes exceed (clients') expectations.”

—Jeffrey Siojo, graphic designer.

Sometimes students know where they want to go, but just don't know how to get there. Such was the case for Jeffrey Siojo, who wanted to be a designer, but spent a year or so studying computer technology before coming to GCC. "By the time I learned about the advertising art certificate I was only a few design courses away from completion," explained Jeff. "After receiving the certificate I also discovered that I could acquire the web design certificate with just two more classes. I started them, but wasn't able to finish due to a job opportunity," he said. That job was in medical billing and although the pay was good, it didn't satisfy his creative ambitions. He quit the medical job and



Vartan Bursalyan, on the job at Glendale Water and Power.

and our mentors and teachers," explained Doug Dall, Principal at Clark Magnet High School. "We have a robotics team that constructs terrestrial and underwater vehicles and enters them in contests, so a lot of our kids will go and sign up for machining courses at Glendale College while they're building their robot," he said. By providing high school students sophisticated technical projects and exposing them to programs at GCC, they

at GCC before he met with his counselor who helped him focus his sights on architecture. "I earned two out of the four architecture certificates that GCC offers—in Architecture Drafting and Architecture CAD—and nearly completed the other two," recalled Vartan. "Then Tom Ferguson [Instructor of Engineering at GCC] e-mailed me about a paid internship opportunity in the electrical engineering department at Glendale

applied at a print shop in Glendale. "They hired me based on the courses I took in school," he said. "It's graphic design and it's more than a job. It's in the field I want to be in. I'm part of a team of three designers. We're assigned jobs and we speak to our clients directly. It's very rewarding to meet and sometimes exceed their expectations. I love the job I am in."

**Do you have any questions about Glendale Community College? Would you like us to mail you information about our programs? How about a campus tour? Please call Student Outreach Services: (818) 240-1000 ext. 4-SOS (4767) or visit our web site: [www.glendale.edu/sos](http://www.glendale.edu/sos). We will be happy to assist you.**

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