

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 24, 2023

GCC Alum Begins Role as Executive Director of the Glendale College Foundation

Berkeley/Harvard grad Paola Santana returns to college where it all started.

(Glendale, CA) – The new Executive Director of the Glendale College Foundation, Paola Santana, has returned to her alma mater to begin her first full week in her new role. Santana’s first official day on the job was Thursday, August 17 in time for GCC’s new school year which begins, Monday, August 28.

Santana is a first generation and community college transfer student. She attended Glendale Community College and went on to earn a baccalaureate degree at the University of California, Berkeley, and a Master’s in Higher Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

As a GCC student, she was a recipient of Glendale College Foundation Scholarships and has since dedicated her life to furthering the academic pursuits of the next generation. She has over fifteen years of experience working across local government, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. She most recently served as strategy officer for state policy for the Lumina Foundation in Indianapolis, where she supported state efforts to increase postsecondary attainment and address racial disparities in attainment.

Previously, Santana led UNITE-LA’s college access and success portfolio and served as an advisor to board members on the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education. She has an extensive record of support for educational equity and improved support for students.

“I am delighted to be joining the Glendale College Foundation. Having been selected to contribute to the success of an institution that has had such a big impact on my life is truly an honor,” said Santana. *“As a first-generation student, Glendale Community College opened doors to many opportunities that I could not have imagined and the support of the Foundation allowed me to dream big and achieve my goals. I am looking forward to making a meaningful impact on the lives of students and the community that we serve.”*

Santana was selected through a rigorous process that included a candidate forum with questions provided by GCC constituent groups. *“Paola demonstrated a breadth of professional and personal experience that makes her an outstanding fit for the college,”* said Dr. Ryan Cornner, GCC Superintendent/President. *“She not only understands our college mission, she has lived it. I value her insight and am pleased to add Paola’s voice to the campus dialogue. I’m thrilled she is joining the GCC family.”*

Glendale College Foundation Board President Jennifer S. Bertolet said, *“On behalf of the entire board of the Foundation, I am looking forward to working with Paola as she brings her wealth of experience back to GCC. She has incredible qualifications to bring to the position, along with her personal experience as a*

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former student at GCC, which will be so valuable to the Foundation and our goals. The Foundation is in an excellent position after the strong leadership of Lisa Brooks, and we are excited for the future with Paola as our new Executive Director.”

Santana replaces Lisa Brooks who retired July 31, after leading the Foundation for fourteen years.

About The Glendale College Foundation

Founded in 1983 by a group of dedicated community volunteers on behalf of Glendale Community College, the Glendale College Foundation is a charitable foundation that raises public awareness of the needs of the college; promotes the college to business and industry and the greater Glendale community; and raises funds for the college. The Foundation achieves its goals through various fundraising programs and special events. It has an endowment of over \$19 million, with more than 500 funds that support student scholarships, facilities, and programs. A distinguished and active 35-member Board of Directors provides steady guidance and support and formulates the policies, goals, and directions of the foundation.

About Glendale Community College

Glendale Community College has served the Glendale community and greater LA Metro region for 96 years. The dynamic institution offers college credit at the Verdugo Campus, continuing education at the Garfield Campus, and customized employment training at the Professional Development Center (PDC) located in Montrose. The college serves an ethnically diverse student body of more than 15 thousand students with a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility with one of the region’s top transfer rates to four-year universities. The GCC Promise Plus provides first time, full-time students with two years free tuition making it a strategic choice for students focused on obtaining a valuable yet affordable four-year college degree. Learn more at glendale.edu.

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