

# ALUMNI NEWS

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Glendale College

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Stable. Charitable. Adaptable. Founded in 1983, Glendale College Foundation has a strong history of adapting to changes within the community and world with support of charitable community members and alumni.





Jennifer S. Bertolet  
President, Board of Directors



Paola Santana  
Executive Director

## THE BOARD CORNER

Dear GCC Alumni and Friends,

We are pleased to present this fall issue of the Glendale Community College Alumni Magazine! As we reflect on the past year, we are deeply grateful for the incredible support and engagement of our alumni, whose contributions continue to enrich the entire GCC community.

The Glendale College Foundation remains committed to supporting the students, departments, facilities, and programs that make our college a vibrant hub of learning and opportunity. Our Board of Directors is proud to engage with our alumni and the greater Glendale community to achieve our mission.

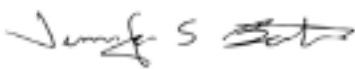
This issue of the Alumni Magazine highlights many of the exciting developments and achievements over the past year, and we couldn't be prouder of the impact we've made together.

As we kick off the 2024-2025 school year, we are especially excited to welcome almost 17,000 students to the GCC family across our campuses! We can't wait to see what this latest class of students will achieve and to hear about your own accomplishments.

We encourage you to stay connected, share your updates, and consider supporting our efforts. Your involvement helps GCC continue to provide students with the resources they need to succeed and to shape a brighter tomorrow.

Thank you for being a valued member of the GCC family!

Warm regards,



Jennifer S. Bertolet  
President, Board of Directors



Paola Santana  
Executive Director

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# PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

**Dr. Ryan Cornner's passion for education and commitment to student success are evident in his leadership of Glendale Community College. As the college approaches its centennial in 2027, he is focused on building upon Glendale's legacy while embracing innovation to prepare students for the future.**

Dr. Ryan Cornner's passion for education and commitment to student success are evident in his leadership of Glendale Community College. As the college approaches its centennial in 2027, he is focused on building upon Glendale's legacy while embracing innovation to prepare students for the future.

Cornner's journey into education began with a career in social work, but a transformative teaching experience revealed his true calling. "It only took one day in the classroom to know that's where I really wanted to be," Cornner said. He saw education as a powerful tool for community impact, stating, "education was just a larger intervention for helping the community. In other words, education was social work."

## A Student-Centric Approach

One of his priorities is fostering a sense of belonging on campus. He emphasizes understanding student experiences, learning from them, and ensuring they feel



*Dr. Cornner congratulating a student graduate at Commencement*

cared for. To achieve this, Glendale has implemented programs like Promise Plus, offering comprehensive support and two years of tuition-free education. This program has significantly increased enrollment, demonstrating its success in supporting students.

## Preparing for the Future of Work

Cornner recognizes the rapid changes in the job market and the need for community colleges to adapt. He believes community colleges are uniquely positioned to address these challenges due to their flexibility and combination of general education and career-technical pathways. Glendale is embracing innovation with programs such as entertainment technology and virtual reality, partnering with industry leaders to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for future careers.

## Building on a Legacy of Success

Glendale Community College has a rich history of serving the community for nearly a century. "We have this amazing legacy at Glendale Community College," Cornner said. "The question is, how do we take that legacy and combine it with innovation so that we're here for the next century the way that we were for the past?" In many ways, this has already started with building a culture of inclusion and equity, recognizing the diverse needs of students, and ensuring access to necessary resources and support. Glendale is also expanding its facilities, including a new Inclusion Center and state-of-the-art science and performing arts buildings.

Under Dr. Ryan Cornner's leadership, Glendale Community College is poised to continue its tradition of excellence, embracing innovation, and preparing students for the future. With a focus on student success, community engagement, and a commitment to building a brighter future, Glendale is well-equipped to thrive in the years to come.

# GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE AT THE FOREFRONT OF INNOVATION

**Glendale Community College (GCC) is excited about the opening of its new Virtual Reality Center, a high-tech facility that offers immersive, VR-enabled courses. GCC is the only community college in the country to offer introductory science courses that incorporate VR-enabled instruction, and this cutting-edge approach has been shown to improve student performance.**

The VR Center was made possible through a \$4.5 million state grant secured by Senator Anthony Portantino, and the GCC Foundation is overseeing distribution of the funds. A permanent home for the center will be located on the Verdugo Campus next to the new Buena Vista Science Center (BVU), a state-of-the-art science facility that was funded by the 2016 Measure GC bond.

BVU is home to the College’s key science departments and features 31 specialized labs, a 125-seat lecture hall, a cadaver lab, and modern teaching spaces. It is equipped with advanced technology, like the nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometer, and is designed to elevate hands-on learning and support student and faculty research.

“The Buena Vista building has transformed our science programs,” said GCC President/Superintendent Dr. Ryan Corner. “It’s not just about the labs and classrooms; it’s about creating an environment where students can

engage in hands-on research and truly experience the thrill of discovery.”

GCC’s partnership with Dreamscape Learn has also positioned the college at the forefront of educational technology. As the first community college in the world to offer Dreamscape Learn’s immersive VR experiences, GCC is providing students with unique opportunities to explore new worlds and concepts.

“VR allows us to create learning experiences that are not only engaging but also deeply impactful,” said Corner. “It’s about making education relevant and exciting for today’s students.”



*The GCC board of trustees and current and former presidents cut the ribbon on the Buena Vista science building*



*The new fully-equipped virtual reality lab, in partnership with Dreamscape Learn*



GCC Trustee Dr. Armine Hacopian and Vahe Hacopian test drive the Virtual Reality technology

GCC is grateful to the Glendale community for their support of Measure GC, and the college is seeking further community support through an upcoming bond issue that will fund infrastructure improvements, new programs, and upgrades to existing facilities.

“We’re so grateful to the Glendale community for their support of Measure GC,” said Cornner. “This building is a testament to what we can accomplish when we work together to invest in our students’ future.”

This November, voters will decide on a new bond measure for GCC to support continued improvements for more programs to upgrade to state-of-the-art learning environments. Should this measure pass, it will provide locally controlled funding to repair and upgrade GCC classrooms and facilities.

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**“VR allows us to create learning experiences that are not only engaging but also deeply impactful,”**

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We encourage all alumni to learn more about how they can support Glendale Community College and its mission to provide students with a high-quality, affordable education. Visit [glendale.edu/foundation](http://glendale.edu/foundation) for more information.



Dr. Ryan Cornner and Glendale College Foundation Executive Director Paola Santana thank Senator Anthony Portantino for his support of the new GCC virtual reality center



Guests participate in virtual reality lesson during the Foundation's President's Circle event

# VAQUERO PRIDE! HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION RETURNS

**Glendale Community College held its 17th Athletic Hall of Fame banquet and reception with 200 people eager to celebrate after a six year hiatus**

Brandy Morin and Grace Graham-Zamudio were honored for their exceptional athletic achievements, making history as the first time both inducted athletes were women.

Brandy, a standout softball player from the 2012 season, led the team to the most successful year in school history. She set six all-time records, including 23 wins and 171 strikeouts in 227 innings pitched, while also hitting .417 at the plate. Brandy’s incredible performance helped GCC secure their first-ever conference title in softball, and her dedication earned her the well-deserved title of Female Athlete of the Year.

Grace, an exceptional cross country and track star, represented GCC from 2011-2013. She achieved All-American status in both sports and consistently set records. Grace won three state championships in track and field, not in one season, but in one meet, becoming one of the most accomplished runners in the school’s history.

Bob Donaghy, a fixture of GCC athletics, was honored for over 45 years of coaching both men’s and women’s tennis, and is still found helping athletes on the courts. Throughout his career, he earned the state Coach of the Year award, had 235 wins in 25 years of coaching the men’s teams, and led his men’s teams to three Western State Conference titles.

Alex Leon, Sports Information Director, says those around Coach Donaghy appreciate that he continues to give back to the College.

“He has led his teams to a lot of wins and turned out great players, but character and loyalty are really important to us. That’s part of the hallmark of our athletic department.”

Other Hall of Fame honorees included Distinguished Community Partner, Manny Mashhoud, and the 2011 baseball team for their historic season. Dr. Jack Yu was

honored with the meritorious service recognition, and former GCC Superintendent and President Dr. David Viar with the Pillar of Achievement award.

The celebration, which takes place every two years, is a fundraiser to support the College’s 16 teams.

Learn about more ways to support GCC athletics at [glendale.edu/hof](http://glendale.edu/hof)



*The 17th Athletic Hall of Fame Honorees*



*Grace Graham Zamudio celebrates being inducted into the GCC Athletic Hall of Fame*



*GCC's Women's Cross Country Team celebrates its 18th consecutive Western State Conference championship*

## **Vaqueros Athletics Celebrates Standout 2023-24 Season**

Glendale Community College's Vaqueros celebrated a remarkable 2023-24 athletic season, securing conference titles, individual awards, and numerous all-conference selections.

The women's cross-country team clinched its 18th straight Western State Conference (WSC) championship, while the men's team placed second. Together, they boasted 16 all-WSC athletes.

Women's tennis captured the WSC title, with Mane Sargsyan winning the WSC championship and Player of the Year. Deo Sy was named WSC Coach of the Year, and four players earned all-conference honors. The men's team finished second, with J.B. Badon securing the WSC championship, first-team honors, and co-Player of the Year. Chris Tissot shared the Co-WSC Coach of the Year title, and seven additional players received all-conference recognition.

Women's basketball won its fifth consecutive WSC championship and reached the state championship game for the first time. The team's 30-3 record included a 25-game win streak. Evelyn Birau and Patil Yaacobian were named WSC Defensive Player and Sixth Man of the Year, respectively, while Joel Weiss earned both WSC and Southern California Coach of the Year.

Men's basketball made its first state playoff appearance in a decade, finishing fourth in the conference with four all-WSC players.

Baseball placed second, led by Izzy Madariaga's Golden Glove and nine all-WSC selections. Softball finished third, with Mya Chacon and Torii Forsberg named to the All-Southern California First Team and six players earning all-conference honors.

Men's golf placed fourth in the WSC with three all-conference players. Women's track and field had Lilit Arakelyan win the 3,000-meter steeplechase, and three athletes earn all-WSC honors. Men's track and field had nine all-WSC athletes.

Women's soccer's Ashley Messier was named WSC Goalie of the Year and First Team All-WSC, with four teammates earning all-conference honors. Men's soccer had five all-WSC players.

Football finished 5-5 overall, placing third in the conference. 15 players received all-conference recognition. Women's volleyball finished fifth, with four all-conference selections. Beach volleyball had two players named Second Team All-WSC.

For more on Vaqueros athletics, visit [www.gccathletics.com](http://www.gccathletics.com).



*Western State Conference (WSC) Champion GCC's Women's Tennis team, Coach Matthew Taoatao, and WSC Coach of the Year Deo Sy*

# ALUMNI PROFILE: ARMEN VARTANIAN

**Oceanview Capital Partners, Inc. Founder Armen Vartanian credits a piece of his career success to his time at Glendale Community College (GCC).**

After a self-described lackluster performance in high school, Vartanian sought a fresh start at GCC. It was there that the private equity firm head found his stride and thrived academically, earning nearly straight A's and participating in the Scholars Honors Program.

He points to the mentorship of several professors, including Dr. Michael Ritterbrown and the late Dierdre Collins, who took an active interest in his success, calling them “mentors who had a lasting impact.”

“My entrepreneurial spirit was nurtured at GCC,” he said. “I learned the importance of being resilient, using resources available to me and staying focused on my goals.”

These lessons proved invaluable in his entrepreneurial journey, where he faced challenges and overcame them through grit, perseverance and adaptability.

During his time at GCC, Vartanian was also involved with the Glendale Kiwanis Club, receiving a scholarship and mentorship from the late Richard Jouroyan, who helped him secure his first internship in finance. Additionally, Vartanian’s involvement in the Scholars Program and Alpha Gamma Sigma honed his leadership skills.

Vartanian went on to receive his Master of Business Administration degree from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, with Honors, from the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley.

Not long after he left Berkeley, he formed Oceanview Capital Partners, Inc., which he still runs today. In an effort to show gratitude for the transformative experience he had at GCC, Vartanian began giving back to the college.

He first established three scholarships in honor of his mentors and his firm, aiming to provide support to students who demonstrate drive and determination. He is particularly passionate about fostering opportunities for students, regardless of their background or experiences and is enthusiastic about the growing emphasis on business and entrepreneurship at GCC.

Vartanian’s contributions to GCC extend beyond financial support. He actively participates in initiatives like Glendale Tech Week, connecting GCC student clubs with tech and business opportunities. He has provided comped tickets to students for events, facilitated their involvement in organizing Tech Week events, and coordinated a GCC student hackathon.

Through his time, financial contributions and mentorship, Vartanian hopes to inspire students at GCC to believe in their limitless potential. He said he wants to instill a mindset of perseverance and self-belief, empowering students to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. He encourages students to use all of the resources available to them while at GCC and to always work hard toward achieving their goals.



Armen Vartanian  
Founder, Oceanview Capital Partners, Inc.



## ALUMNI NEWS:



Alen R. Andriassian  
Vice President of Student Services

GCC proudly welcomes back alumnus **Dr. Alen R. Andriassian** as the new Vice President of Student Services. Andriassian's impressive career includes serving as LACC's Vice President of Student Services, where he championed community building and innovation. Alen received his Associate of Arts degree and served as the Associated Students President and Student Trustee. With a strong background in student life and leadership, Andriassian is committed to fostering a positive and supportive environment for all GCC students.



Alina Hope Martin  
Author

**Alina Hope Martin** is a 2023 graduate of our Mass Communications program. A successful author, her recent book *Discover Yourself through the Art of Poetry*, shares relatable highs and lows from her life. Our favorite celebration in the book? Her graduation from GCC!

Alumnus **Jesse Melgares** has dedicated his career to improving academic systems. Having recently earned his Masters from the Yale School of Management, he is now the CEO of the Accelerated Schools.



Jesse Melgares  
CEO, The Accelerated Schools

## YOU HAVE PLANS!

### GCC Planetarium, Verdugo Campus

Catch a star show every Wednesday,  
12:30 pm - 1 pm  
Open to everyone

### GCC Board of Trustees Meetings

Third Tuesday of every month  
San Rafael Building 138 - Kreider Hall,  
5 pm - 8 pm

### Important Election Dates

Oct 7 - Early Voting Begins  
(Measure GCC is on the ballot!)  
Oct 21 - California Voter Registration  
Deadline  
Nov. 5 - General Election

### Spring 2025

#### President's Circle Reception Spring 2025

A fun celebration is ahead to thank our President's Circle for their generosity. President's Circle members contribute \$1,000 or more in unrestricted giving annually. Learn more at <https://www.glendale.edu/about-gcc/foundation-community/president-s-circle>

#### Scholarship & Awards Banquet May 2025

We look forward to celebrating students who receive thousands of dollars in scholarships and our generous donors at this annual celebration!

#### Community Open House May 3, 2025

10:30 am - 1:30 pm  
Open to Everyone

## GOOD NEWS AT GCC:



Dr. Ryan Cornner  
GCC Superintendent/President

### Chamber of Commerce Honors GCC Leaders

GCC Superintendent/President Dr. Ryan Cornner and Foundation Secretary Miryam Orellana Finkelberg were honored as Man and Woman of the Year, respectively, at the Glendale Chamber of Commerce 2024 Awards & State of the City Luncheon.

Dr. Cornner, GCC's President since 2022, is committed to equitable access to education. His leadership centers on fostering a collaborative, supportive campus environment.

Miryam Orellana Finkelberg, a GCC alumna, has served on the Glendale College Foundation Board since 2016. Her dedication to community service and education exemplifies GCC's values.

This recognition underscores GCC's commitment to student success and community engagement.



Miryam Orellana Finkelberg  
Foundation Board Secretary

### Record-Breaking Commencement

Our 2024 commencement ceremony saw a record-breaking 1,265 graduates earn 2,153 degrees and certificates. The ceremony was filled with proud guests who cheered on the hardworking Class of 2024, which included our youngest grad at age 17 and our most senior at 78.

The celebration also included 36 graduates who were part of the GUSD Hoover High School Early College Academy.

A big congratulations goes to our newest alumni!

### GCC Achieves Re-Accreditation

GCC has achieved the highest level of accreditation, reaffirmed for seven years. The College met all 127 quality standards set by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges and received no recommendations for improvement, a rare achievement.

The outcome of the comprehensive accreditation evaluation celebrates the exemplary work and effort of the college's classified professionals, faculty, and administrators to educate and improve the lives of GCC's students in a fiscally responsible manner.

### GCC's Baja Program Celebrates 50 Years

Students in the program can meet biology requirements while taking a variety of other classes and exploring a unique environment, leading to close relationships and improved academic performance. This program is made possible in part by our generous donors and dedicated faculty and staff. Just one of many ways we continue to impact students' lives.



Students explore the Sea of Cortez during a class at the Baja Field Station



## MISSION

We empower students to transform their lives by achieving their economic, educational, career, and life goals through our instructional programs, student services, and community partnerships.



## MISSION

The Glendale College Foundation works to create public awareness of the needs of the college; to promote the college to business and industry and the greater Glendale community; and to raise funds for students, facilities and programs.

## Ways to Make a Tax-Deductible Gift to Glendale College Foundation



### ONLINE

[www.glendale.edu/donation](http://www.glendale.edu/donation)



### PHONE

818.551.5201



### MAIL

Send your check payable to:  
Glendale College Foundation  
1500 N. Verdugo Road  
Glendale, CA 91208



### Recurring Gift/Monthly Installment

A recurring monthly gift is an easy, affordable way to ensure your support for Glendale College. A certain amount can be charged to your credit or debit card, dividing your gift over the course of the year. To sign up for a recurring monthly gift visit [www.glendale.edu/donation](http://www.glendale.edu/donation)



### Matching Gift

Double the impact of your donation. Please check with your employer to see if they participate in a corporate matching gift program.



### Planned Gifts

Including Glendale College Foundation in your estate plan is a simple, yet powerful, way to invest in GCC's future. We can help you structure a gift of any size to meet your tax, estate planning, and philanthropic goals. Please contact Paola Santana at 818.551.5196 to learn more.



### Donor Advised Funds

Support the Glendale College Foundation by recommending a single or recurring grant from your Donor Advised Fund (DAF) before year-end. Or leave a lasting legacy by designating the Foundation as a beneficiary of all or a portion of your fund. Contact your administrator to recommend a grant or designate a beneficiary.



### Stock

If you are interested in making a gift of stock/securities, please contact Paola Santana, Foundation Executive Director at 818.551.5196



### Tax Deductibility

Your gift is a tax-deductible to the full extent of the current laws. Please discuss with your accountant or tax preparer for more information.

**We invite you to act now to support Glendale College Foundation!**