



SAN MATEO COUNTY
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE DISTRICT

Cañada College • College of San Mateo • Skyline College

Combined Report of the College Presidents





CAÑADA COLLEGE HOLDS 54TH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY



After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, Cañada College held its 54th Commencement in-person and back at its outdoor, on-campus location on Saturday, May 28. Energy and excitement filled the air as faculty, staff, friends and family members of the Cañada Class of 2022 honored the 563 graduates who earned a total of 872 degrees and certificates.

Of the Class of 2022:

- 53 percent were first-generation
- 63 percent were female
- 51 percent were Latinx
- The average age of our graduating class was 25-years-old

In alignment with the College's dedication to antiracism, equity, inclusion and diversity, Cañada College's 54th Commencement Ceremony featured new and important cultural acknowledgements. These included a special land recognition that Cañada College occupies the ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone people, the original inhabitants of the San Francisco Peninsula. In addition, for the first time, the

Black National Anthem was included in the program and was beautifully performed by Richard Hayes II.

Student Speaker Griselda Mayén, who immigrated to the United States in 2012 from a small village in Guatemala, shared that she came to the United States looking for opportunities but did not speak English and her goal was to learn the language. While taking ESL classes at Sequoia Adult School and then transferring to Cañada College, she quickly discovered that this was only the beginning of her dreams and that she also wanted to earn a college degree. Griselda has been accepted into Menlo College where she plans to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Business Analysis.

The Keynote Speaker for Cañada's Commencement was Councilmember for the City of East Palo Alto, Antonio López. He ran for City Council of East Palo Alto because he wanted to inspire the next generation of young leaders. Councilmember López, who was born and raised in Gardens District of East Palo Alto, spoke about being a proud son of Mexican immigrants. He shared that, coming from a low-income family in East Palo Alto, he understood the struggles that many of the graduates had endured and congratulated them on overcoming obstacles to achieve their academic goals. His keynote speech inspired the Class of 2022. A brief excerpt from Councilmember López's speech included:

"Who were those figures who saw that potential in you? Big or small. Day one, or day now. From those who loved you enough to cross a country, to those who maybe stayed a bit after class. Regardless of when they came to your life, there is a commencement class of heroes who sat on the sidelines cheering you on, who pushed you as you went along your path. You know the teachers that had your back from day one when even you didn't have your back, who worked with you to bump up that grade so you can get all A's and B's. You know the counselors and advisers that said, "Don't even think about dropping out. Just stick to it." Among the millions of reasons why they will be your lifelong friends, let me tell you just one: it is something beautiful to witness a person evolve before your very eyes."

Each Cañada College graduate who crossed the stage had a special story to share on what inspired them to accomplish their goals. For Cañada graduate and mother, Walaa Alshaer,

her family was her inspiration and she beamed with pride as she graduated from Cañada College while at the same time celebrating her children's graduations. Her eldest daughter graduated from high school, her middle daughter graduated from middle school and her son graduated from elementary school.



The Commencement Ceremony was live streamed and can be viewed [here](#). Congratulations to the Cañada College Class of 2022!

College of San Mateo

CSM HONORS AND CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL GRADUATING CLASS OF 2022



Returning in person after a two-year break, College of San Mateo held its Centennial Commencement Ceremony on May 27 in a new outdoor location. CSM's College Heights Stadium welcomed over 240 graduates and their families, where 1,623 degrees and certificates were awarded on a sunny, yet windy afternoon. The stands were packed with friends and family members as graduates entered the stadium and took their seats on the football turf.



The ceremony opened with greetings and remarks from CSM President Jennifer Taylor-Mendoza, who encouraged graduates to use their voices to promote justice and shared prosperity. She asked students to work collaboratively to build a better world for future generations. "In doing so, you bring honor to yourselves, your families, communities, and those who have shown you such respect and attention these past years," said President Taylor-Mendoza. SMCCCD Trustee Lisa Petrides then provided

BOARD REPORT | JUNE 22, 2022

a welcome, followed by a retiree recognition by Vice President of Administrative Services Micaela Ochoa and presentation of the graduating class by Associated Students of College of San Mateo President Andrea Morales.



Student speaker Matelita Kavapalu Fa'asisila, a first-generation Tongan American student, shared emotional words of encouragement to the audience. She was a CSM Middle College student, a part of the EOPS program, a member of the Associated Students student government, and part of the inaugural AAPI Leadership Program cohort.

Next, graduates heard from keynote speaker Marty J. Alvarado, the Executive Vice Chancellor for the Office of Equitable Student Learning, Experience, and Impact within the California Community College Chancellors Office. Marty spoke to the many challenges students face and congratulated those graduating for their ability to rise and thrive.

After graduates excitedly crossed the stage to be recognized for their achievement, most of the assembled crowd moved up the College Center's Bayview Dining Room for a centennial-themed reception. Friends and families danced, ate, took photos and basked in the success of the Class of 2022.

Here is a snapshot of this centennial class of graduates.

First-generation college graduates	414
Veterans	41
Foster Youth	3
Promise Scholar Graduates	162
DACA/Dreamers/AB540 Students	29
International Students	40
Oldest graduate	78
Youngest graduate	16
Graduates with honors	440



FIRST-EVER OUTDOOR COMMENCEMENT A GREAT SUCCESS



Skyline College held its first in-person commencement since the beginning of the pandemic on May 27, 2022. This year, for the first time ever, the ceremony was held outside at Skyline College's Track & Field. It was a beautiful event, appreciated by our students, and their families and friends. The significance of bringing the event outdoors was to not only recognize students, but also to give so many family and friends an opportunity to witness this milestone in their loved-one's life. Congratulations to all who participated and made this day possible.

The ceremony began with a processional of students and faculty, cheered on by over 1,000 attendees. Faculty Marshal Alice Erskine opened the ceremony and introduced graduate Audrey Degon who performed a stunning rendition of I'll Be There.

Skyline College President, Dr. Melissa Moreno, then delivered her commencement address, sharing that 1,625 academic awards were earned this year, including a record 1,272 associate and bachelor degrees and 353 certificates. This year's graduating class ranged in age from 16 to 75, 430 students graduated with honors, 557 students were the first to graduate from college in their family, 39 were veterans, and 45 were international students.

BOARD REPORT | JUNE 22, 2022

Dr. Moreno focused her remarks on encouraging students to hold fast to their dreams and fly, and called on students to live up to their promise:

"And with this day, our expectations of you are only beginning. From this day forward, you are an agent of change...who will transform our world into something better. That is what it means to be a graduate of Skyline College - we expect you to carry this legacy with you as you step into your future. The future is not only your opportunity, but our collective opportunity to create a better world. And this is our expectation of you: To create a better world!"



Student Speaker Oliver Elias Tinoco followed Dr. Moreno and encouraged his peers to appreciate the foundation of friends, family and history that brought each of them to that point in their lives and underscored the pride they should feel:

"Take pride in knowing that through it all, you have managed to be here so allow yourself to soak in the love, compassion, and resilience that is abundant in our community today. In closing here at Skyline College; our foundation is our educators, faculty, staff, and above all else - our students. To my fellow graduates, if you hear it from no one else today - I am proud of you."



Graduates then each crossed the stage to receive their diploma and turned their tassels.

Congratulations to the Skyline College Class of 2022!

Please make sure to watch the amazing [highlight video](#) and check out some of the [photos](#) from the day of commencement.