

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

December 2024

SAVE THE DATE

## CRAFTON'S FIELD OF DREAMS FUNDRAISER

OCTOBER 16, 2025

CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE  
11711 Sand Canyon Rd.,  
Yucaipa, CA 92399

TIME  
5:30-8:30  
P.M.

### From Service to Success: Chris Markarian Inspires Veterans at Crafton Hills College Event



At Crafton Hills College's recent Veterans Day event, attendees gathered to honor CHC student military veterans for their resilience, dedication, and contributions. Chris Markarian, a local attorney and former Navy and Army servicemember who serves on the CHC Foundation board of directors captivated the audience with his inspiring life story and reflections on service, education, and opportunity.

Markarian's journey began in Iraq, growing up amidst challenging circumstances that ultimately propelled him to seek a new life in the United States. After the events of 9/11, he joined the Navy as a gas turbine systems electrician, later pivoting to cryptology due

to his unique language skills and cultural background. Markarian's expertise in Arabic, Farsi, and other languages proved invaluable, especially as he deployed during pivotal military actions in Iraq.

The experience of serving shaped Markarian's deep respect for American values. He spoke passionately about the importance of defending rights, especially for society's most vulnerable members, and reflected on how his time in the military illuminated the true meaning of service. This reverence for American principles, he explained, was a cornerstone of his dedication to veterans' rights and his legal career.

Transitioning to civilian life, Markarian pursued a career in law. He shared how his military training enabled him to earn multiple academic degrees, ultimately leading to a career where he continues to advocate for others. He highlighted the opportunities in higher education available to veterans, emphasizing the value of programs that award college credits for military experience.

In closing, Markarian offered practical advice on entrepreneurship, encouraging veterans to explore business ownership and government contracting programs that give priority to veteran-owned businesses. He also extended a personal invitation for veterans to connect with him for guidance, showing his commitment to supporting fellow servicemembers as they navigate their post-military careers.

As the event wrapped up, attendees left with renewed appreciation for veterans' sacrifices and the profound ways their service continues to enrich American society. Markarian's story underscored not only the possibilities of transformation but also the enduring spirit of those who serve.

*Photo: Chris Markarian (center) with Veterans Resource Center staff and students.*

## Anthropology Open House Draws Crowds



Skulls, bones, and a complete skeleton (reproductions) were on display for the many visitors to the Anthropology open house on Thursday, November 7, in the new Anthropology classroom/lab in CHC's Central Complex. There was also

a spread of delicious Mexican food for lunch and a large birthday cake for "Lucy," the 3.3-million-year-old skeletal remains of what anthropologists recognize as evidence of one of the earliest human ancestors ever discovered. Her reproduced skeleton perched on a lab table for attendees to admire.

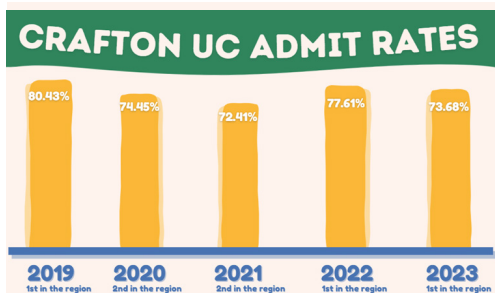
Professor Cheryl DiBartolo and part-time Anthropology faculty, staff and students were on hand to answer visitor questions and explain the display behind the glass doors of the many cabinets in this new facility. Attendees included faculty, CHC managers, and many students, including Anthropology alumni who now attend CSUSB.

Guest speaker Dr. Sang Hee-Lee, Anthropology professor from UC, Riverside used the lab's reproduced skulls and bones to explain the physical features that distinguish humans from other animals, such as apes and monkeys. She stressed that the first humans were not apes or monkeys that evolved into humans but a separate species.

Attendees got a glimpse of how well developed CHC's Anthropology program has become in offering a rich educational experience.

*Photo: Dr. Hee-Lee presents at Anthropology open house.*

## Crafton Hills College Achieves Top UC Admit Rates in the Inland Empire



As Crafton Hills College prepared for its annual High School Counselor event, a review of admission statistics revealed an impressive achievement: CHC holds the highest University of California (UC)

admission rates among Inland Empire community colleges, ranking #1 for the past year and #1 or #2 over the past five years (see graph below).

This success reflects the dedicated efforts of CHC's faculty and staff, both in the classroom and across support services.

"A well-crafted Student Educational Plan (SEP) positions each student for favorable admission decisions," noted Transfer Coordinator Mariana Macamay, emphasizing that it truly takes the entire

college community to help students reach their transfer goals. The teamwork among front desk support, counseling services, and instructional departments is instrumental in ensuring Roadrunners are well-prepared for transfer and success.

This accomplishment showcases CHC's commitment to student achievement and underscores the College's role as a leader in the region for transfer success.

*Photo: Graph showing CHC to UC admit rates from 2019-2023.*

## Crafton Hills College Hosts USC Students for Sustainability Showcase



On November 5, Crafton Hills College welcomed students from the University of Southern California for a hands-on look at the campus's sustainability efforts. The program began with a presentation by Farrah Farzaneh and Yash Patel from the San Bernardino Community College District (SBCCD) Sustainability Office, detailing the district's sustainability goals and initiatives, including energy efficiency and waste reduction.

Industry leaders from ARUP, AECOM, DLP Group, Kitchell, and Bernards then shared

their expertise, explaining how sustainable practices are embedded into CHC's construction projects. Students toured key facilities, such as the Crafton Center, the Central Plant, and the Performing Arts Center, observing green architecture and resource-efficient systems in action.

The USC students left inspired by CHC's commitment to sustainability and its role as a leader in green practices within higher education.

*Photo: Attendees before tour.*



## From Intern to Full-Time Employee: How Crafton Hills College’s Internship Programs Opened Doors for One Roadrunner



Navigating the job market is never easy, but Crafton Hills College’s Foundation provides financial assistance that helps Roadrunners like Nina Valenzuela find internships or jobs that fit their educational plans.

This program enabled Valenzuela to work for three months, from March through June, as an intern for the City of Yucaipa, strengthening her skills in graphic design and helping promote the city’s Performing Arts Center. Weeks later, she was asked if she’d like to join the team full-time as the city’s social media marketing assistant. She did not hesitate to say “yes.”

“I love it,” said the 28-year-old Crafton student of her position. “I was just expecting an internship at the most and had three internships lined up after this one ended. But on the last day of work, they told me they were going to try to talk to the city of Yucaipa [manager] to see if there was room in the budget for me. I later got the call that if I wanted the position, it was mine. It was awesome.”

Valenzuela worked closely with Pedro Chabolla, a regional job developer in Crafton’s Career Services department.

She said the application process from start to finish took about a week and a half to complete.

“Pedro helped me update my resume to a new format according to AI reading standards, and I literally live right around the corner from where I have to go into work,” she said. “The speed in which he found a position that aligned with what degree—web development—I’m getting was so amazing.”

Part of the perks Valenzuela gets to experience is witnessing the behind-the-scenes organization it takes to put on a show at the Performing Arts Center, including developing social media teasers of the Five Winds Country Music Festival.

*Photo: Nina Valenzuela.*

## Crafton Hills College Honored for Excellence in Equitable Placement and Transfer-Level Math Success for Black Students



On November 13, the Campaign for College Opportunity announced that it has selected Crafton Hills College as one of the 20 California Community Colleges receiving its 2024 Excellence in Placement Award, recognizing institutions implementing AB 705 for equitable course placement. This law ensures students have

direct access to transfer-level courses in math and English, advancing their timely degree completion and transfer to a four-year university. It addresses long-standing barriers in transfer pathways, where required remedial courses had delayed student progress, disproportionately affecting Black and Latinx students.

Crafton Hills College, along with Cuyamaca College and College of the Canyons, was recognized as one of the top three community colleges in the state with the highest percentage of Black students completing transfer-level math within one year of initial enrollment. This equity designation reflects the college’s commitment to dismantling barriers for Black and Latinx students and supporting their success through the AB 705 policy.

“Transfer-level classes are essential for timely graduation and student success,”

said Dr. Kevin Horan, President of Crafton Hills College. “Equitable placement policies like AB 705 empower students to progress without unnecessary barriers, allowing them to stay on track and achieve their educational goals.”

Jessie Ryan, President of the Campaign for College Opportunity, noted that equitable placement is essential for ensuring students, especially from underserved communities, can meet their educational goals. This recognition highlights Crafton Hills College’s commitment to student success and equitable education practices that support traditionally underrepresented groups on their paths to transfer and graduation.

*Photo: 2024 Excellence in Placement seal.*

## Crafton Hills College Supports Student Growth and Professional Development at HACU Conference



Crafton Hills College sent a group of 10 students and 5 employees to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) conference in Aurora, Colorado November 1 – 3. This event provides a transformative experience centered on

professional development, networking, and cultural empowerment, connecting students from Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) like Crafton Hills College with industry leaders, career readiness workshops, and peers from similar backgrounds.

Dr. Delmy Spencer, Vice President of Student Services at Crafton Hills College, emphasized the value of this experience, noting, “HACU empowers our students by providing them with a vision for their future, encouraging them to pursue opportunities they may not have previously considered.” For many attendees, the conference is both inspiring and grounding, reinforcing a sense of community and motivating them to bring their insights and enthusiasm back to campus.

Through the HACU experience, Crafton Hills College students returned with strengthened skills, expanded networks, and a renewed commitment to their academic and professional paths.

*Photo: CHC HACU representatives.*

## Crafton Hills College Hosts Día de los Muertos Celebration of Culture and Community



On October 29, Crafton Hills College hosted a vibrant Día de los Muertos celebration, bringing together students, faculty, and the community in a festive atmosphere filled with cultural traditions. Attendees enjoyed free tacos, beans, rice, beverages, and pan dulce, while supplies lasted.

The event featured live mariachi music, face painting, an ofrenda (altar) competition, poetry readings, lotería, and dance performances. We were honored by the presence of speakers and judges from

the Consulates of Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, as well as Crafton leaders Kevin Horan, Keith Wurtz, and Delmy Spencer. A table was available for individuals who wished to build an altar without affiliating with a club, department, or group.

This celebration provided a meaningful opportunity for remembrance and community connection, highlighting the diverse cultural heritage at CHC.

*Photo: Ofrenda honoring deceased loved ones.*

## Crafton Hills College Celebrates Wellness and Support at Accessibility and Mental Health Fair



Crafton Hills College recently held its Accessibility and Mental Health Fair, a successful event focused on wellness, accessibility, and support for students.

Organized by the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and Health and Wellness (HW) departments, the fair provided students with access to campus mental health resources, connections to community support organizations, and a

range of engaging activities.

Food trucks and games contributed to the vibrant atmosphere, fostering both enjoyment and community connection. Held on October 23, the event saw a strong turnout, reinforcing Crafton’s commitment to a healthy and inclusive campus environment.

*Photo: SAS and HW representatives.*