

# President's Board of Trustees Report

The President's Monthly Report to the Board of Trustees, Campus & Community

Taking Flight: Soaring With Partners for Student Success



JUNE 2024

## SBVC Celebrates 97th Graduating Class at San Manuel Stadium

On Tuesday, May 21, the 4,200-seat San Manuel Stadium was packed to capacity as San Bernardino Valley College's Class of 2024 crossed the stage to receive 1,577 degrees and 1,454 certificates, one of the highest counts in the college's almost century-long history. The most popular majors among the 1,679 graduates were liberal arts, business administration, library science, psychology, biology, nursing, social sciences, child development, accounting, administration of justice, police science, psychiatric technology, human services, pharmacy technology, computer information technology, automotive technology, and diesel technology.

Led by SBVC Interim President Dr. Linda Fontanilla, the ceremony featured a keynote address from Dr. Cherina Betters, Chief of Equity & Access at the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Betters emphasized the importance of character on the path to greatness and urged graduates to remain resilient in the face of adversity. "Even when it gets dark, continue to be consistent to reach your greatness," she advised.

Class of 2024 graduate Mariana Lapizco delivered the student speech during the ceremony. She shared her personal journey of overcoming challenges, including language barriers, the loss of her father, and navigating life as an undocumented student. Despite these hurdles, Lapizco found passion in creative arts and film, achieving success in editing, translating scripts, and producing films.



### GOAL 1

ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO STUDENT ACCESS & SUCCESS.



### GOAL 2

BE A DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, & ANTI-RACIST INSTITUTION.



### GOAL 3

BE A LEADER & PARTNER IN ADDRESSING REGIONAL ISSUES.



### GOAL 4

ENSURE FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

June 19

Juneteenth  
Campus Closed

July 6  
5:00pm

SummerFest 2024  
SBVC Stadium

More Events:  
[valleycollege.edu/calendar](http://valleycollege.edu/calendar)



# SBVC'S UNFORGETTABLE 2024 GRADUATION SEASON

The 2024 graduation season at San Bernardino Valley College was a vibrant tapestry of celebrations, each event uniquely honoring the diverse communities and achievements of the graduating class. These special ceremonies highlighted not only the academic success of the students but also the rich cultural heritages and personal journeys that defined their paths.



**April 30 - Lavender Grad:** SBVC's second annual Lavender Grad celebrated the college's LGBTQIA+ graduates. Adorned in special pride flag sashes, the event highlighted the students' achievements and personal identities. Lavender, symbolizing diversity and gender fluidity, added significance, especially with LGBTQIA+ staff members participating.

**May 4 - Island Grad:** this special evening for the region's Pacific Islander graduates combined traditional fanfare with contemporary festivity. The ceremony began with the Pu' and a welcoming Oli, setting a reverent tone. Scholarship awards recognized outstanding student accomplishments and guest artist Siaosi's performance added an electrifying ambiance. The day concluded with the MILI MILI chant, symbolizing the unity and strength of the graduates.

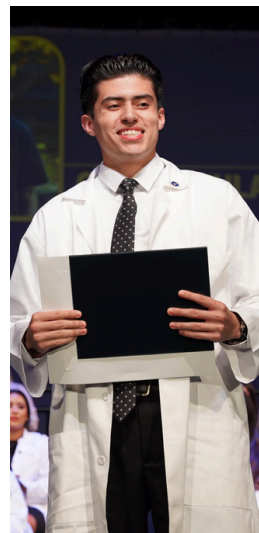
**May 10 - Pharmacy Tech Pinning Ceremony:** this special ceremony marked the transition of SBVC's pharmacy technology students into patient care. Held in the historic SBVC Auditorium, the ceremony began with the SBVC Voci Soli Choir's performance of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Eloise Gomez Reyes delivered the keynote and CVS representatives awarded certificates to outstanding students.

**May 11 - Nuestra Graduación:** this celebration honored Latinx students, complete with traditional music and dance. Scholarships recognized academic excellence and guest speakers emphasized community support. The event concluded with a festive reception, reflecting on the graduates' journeys and future opportunities.

**May 15 - Nursing Pinning Ceremony:** this ceremony featured heartfelt speeches amid the traditional pinning that signifies the transition from student to healthcare professional. Class Speaker Kelemete Leilua emphasized resilience and camaraderie. The candlelighting tradition symbolized the transfer of knowledge, and the Nightingale Pledge marked the nurses' commitment to healthcare.

**May 18 - Black Grad Celebration:** this memorable evening was filled with inspiration and community spirit. Keynote speaker Timothy Jones urged graduates to become the CEOs of their own lives, while Joe Baca, Jr. highlighted the importance of resilience in achieving one's dreams. Graduates received kente cloths, symbolizing their heritage and achievements, and five students were awarded scholarships. The event's upbeat atmosphere, enhanced by vibrant music, celebrated the hard work and success of the graduates.

These annual graduation season events at SBVC showcased and celebrated the diversity and dedication of the Class of 2024, marking the completion of an important chapter in their academic journeys.





# SBVC Foundation Awards \$570,000 in Scholarships

The 2024 Scholarship Awards Ceremony was held in the SBVC Auditorium on May 7, 2024, where over 400 scholarships, totaling more than \$570,000, were awarded to students. Students and their families filled the auditorium for the celebration. Guest speaker Romeo Flores, whose inspiring journey served as a reminder of the impact of scholarships, shared his own experiences, recounting the challenges he faced and the obstacles he overcame on his educational path. "Our students' stories are inspiring," said Michael Layne, director of the SBVC Foundation. "On behalf of the entire San Bernardino Valley College Foundation and our board of directors, I congratulate them all."



GOAL 1: ELIMINATE BARRIERS TO STUDENT ACCESS & SUCCESS.

## SBVC Highlights Employee Excellence at 29th Annual 'Spotlighting Our Success' Awards Dinner

On April 26, SBVC celebrated the achievements of staff and faculty members at the 29th Annual 'Spotlighting Our Success' Awards Dinner. It was a night filled with pride and recognition that showcased the college's commitment to excellence, innovation, and student success across its many departments. Following a welcome from Dr. Linda Fontanilla and SBCCD Board Chair Dr. Stephanie Houston, staff were honored in 20 award categories, as well as for advancements in academic rank. A special tribute was paid to the late Professor Joel Lamore, whose wife received his certificate.



## Celebrating the Contributions of 26 Retiring Colleagues

On May 6, the SBVC community expressed heartfelt appreciation as students, staff and faculty came together to celebrate the remarkable careers and lasting impact of 26 retiring colleagues.

As each retiree took center stage to receive their special plaques and farewell gifts, the room brimmed with fond memories, with colleagues and supervisors alike sharing personal anecdotes about the contributions each retiree had made during their tenure at SBVC.

Interim President, Dr. Linda Fontanilla captured the sentiment of the occasion, remarking, "A massive thank you to all the retirees who have made life here so successful for our students, staff, and faculty.

We will miss them terribly and wish them all the very best." Her words echoed the collective sentiment of all gathered to wish the retirees success in the next chapter of their lives.







# Faculty Spotlight

## David Smith | Professor Emeritus, Mathematics



Professor David Smith has worn many hats since he started working 47 years ago, but being a math professor at San Bernardino Valley College is the one that fit him best.

"This has been my most satisfying gig, no question," Smith said. "Many good semesters here with a lot of students passing classes and taking good steps towards their dreams."

Smith enjoyed teaching at Christian schools, working as a writer for a daily Christian radio broadcast, and being an adjunct professor at Moorpark College. It was always his wish, though, to be a full-time math professor, and when a position opened at SBVC in 2009, Smith applied as fast as he could and was "so ecstatic" when he landed the job.

"I am truly grateful and overwhelmed by my good fortune," he said, adding, "There really is no lifestyle like that of a math professor at this level. It's fun, it's variety, it's always meeting awesome new students. I've loved it with a great passion."

With 15 years of teaching at SBVC under his belt, Smith said he still "feels a glow when a young person calls me 'Professor.' I'm never quite sure I deserve that title, but have tried hard to live up to what it implies." He also gets a thrill when he sees "satisfaction on a student's face as they savor an unexpected success. Many come into my classroom assuming the worst, sure they will fail. And yes, some do! But many others absorb an explanation, and have a smile break forth as they abruptly get it."

Now, Smith is ready to start his next chapter. He is retiring from SBVC and moving back to Newbury Park with his wife, with plans to travel, help a local church, and possibly play bass or keyboards in a "geezer rock band." Smith has penned 10 love stories set in Bangkok, where he grew up, and a trilogy of spiritual time-travel stories, and said he also "might write one or two more books."

Interim Dean of Mathematics, Business & Computer Technology Bethany Tasaka credits Smith with bringing her to SBVC; after meeting him at a conference in 2016, he encouraged her to apply for a position on campus. Since then, "David has been nothing but encouraging and kind to me the entire time I have worked here," she said.

He has long been an "integral part of the Mathematics Department, providing excellent input and scholarship for many years," Tasaka continued. "He is a mentor to many of his colleagues and his students adore him. His impact on the campus will be felt for a long time."

Smith is looking forward to what retirement will bring him, but will miss the "camaraderie with my math friends as well as many other sweet and generous staffers all across this campus," he said. "I've so much loved the Valley community and being a part of making a difference here."



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