



# A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE CEO ROLE IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

*CHALLENGES, PARTNERSHIPS,  
AND OPPORTUNITIES*

**ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF BUSINESS  
OFFICERS INSTITUTE**

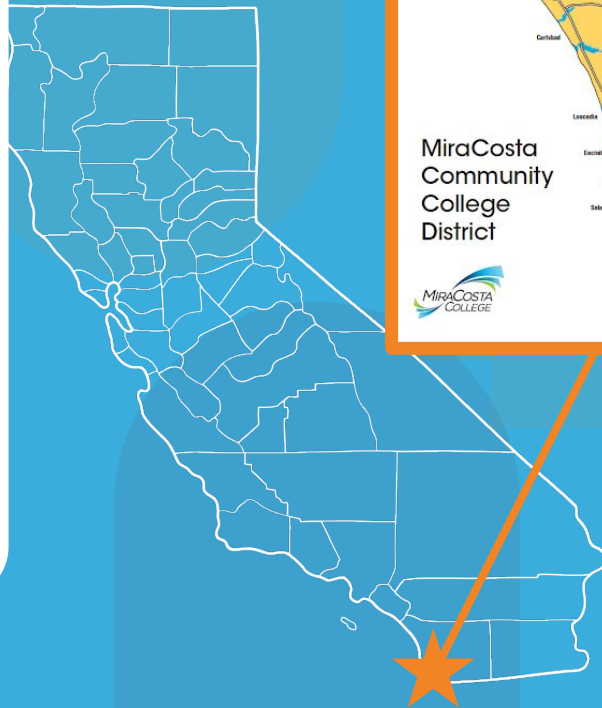
**Sunita Cooke, Ph.D.  
President / Superintendent  
MiraCosta College**





# MiraCosta College Overview

- Four Distinct sites in coastal North San Diego County
- Serving about 28,000 students (credit, noncredit, not-for-credit, adult high school)
- Transfer and Workforce degrees, certificates, and a bachelor's degree
- High transfer rate to State Universities





# MIRACOSTA COLLEGE



**TRANSFER EDUCATION**



**CAREER EDUCATION**



**ADULT EDUCATION**



**COMMUNITY EDUCATION**







43%  
Hispanic  
34%  
White  
9%  
Asian  
7%  
Two or more  
3%  
Black/African  
American  
2%  
Unknown  
1%  
Middle Eastern  
or North African  
1%  
Pacific Islander  
Less than 1%  
American Indian/  
Alaska Native

29  
Average  
Student Age

57% ↔ 43%  
≤ Age 24    Age 25+

#### Gender

Female 58%  
Male 39%  
Other 3%  
Nonbinary 1%

**233**  
Degrees & Certificates  
1 Bachelor's Degree

**18,614**  
Credit Students

**4,336**  
Noncredit Continuing  
Education Students

**7,544**  
Not-for-Credit Community  
Education Students

**2,586**  
Veteran/Active Duty/  
Dependent Enrollment

**25**  
Average Class Size

**\$846,323**  
Foundation Scholarships &  
Emergency Support Awarded

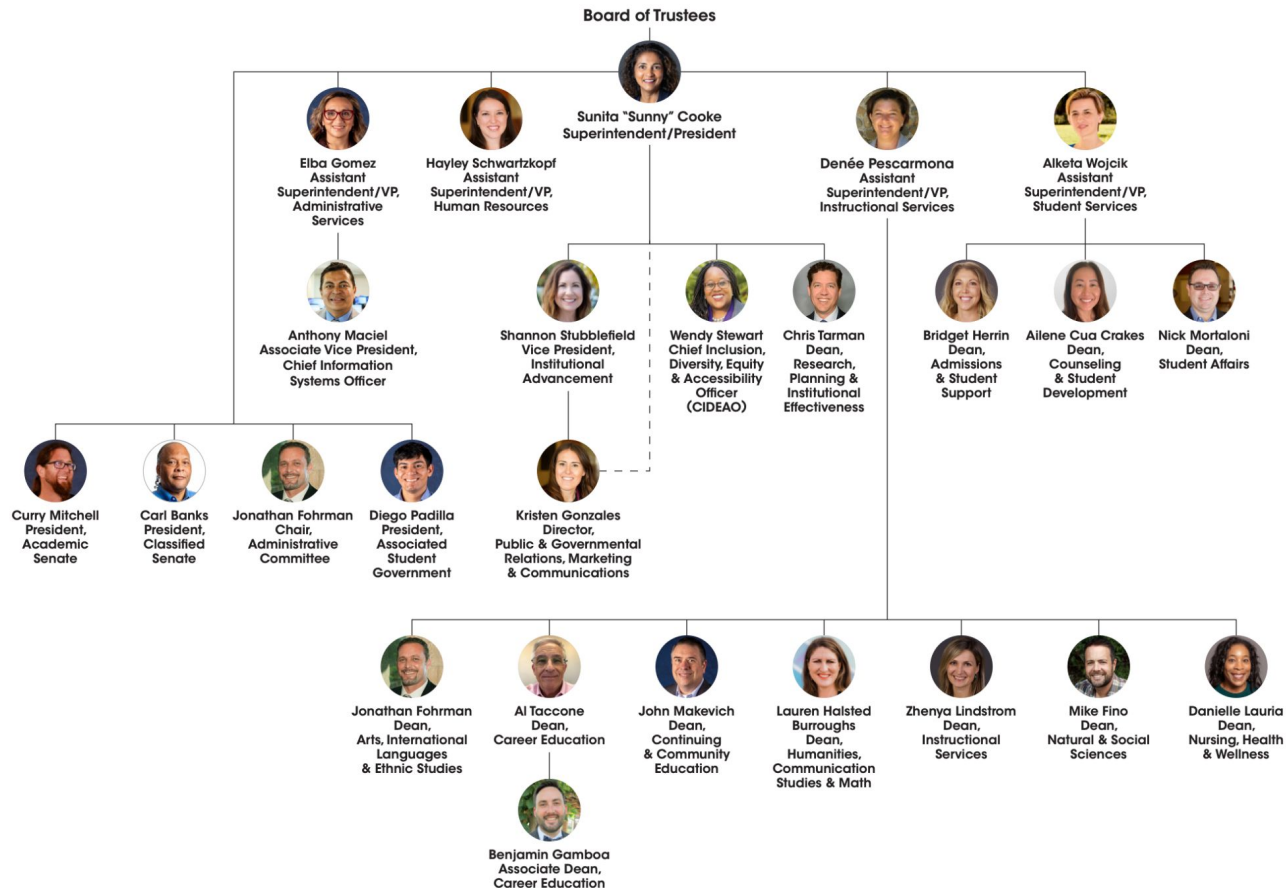
**1,115**  
Employees (Fall 2023)  
207 Full-Time Faculty  
482 Associate Faculty  
405 Classified Staff  
21 Administrators

Data based on the 2022–2023 Academic Year unless otherwise noted.






# Organizational Chart

7.9.2025



# TYPES OF CEO ROLES

Title	Scope of Responsibility	Typical Reporting Structure	Example
President	A community college within a multi-college district	Reports to the District Chancellor or Superintendent/President	 G R O S S M O N T C O L L E G E The logo for Grossmont College, featuring the text "G R O S S M O N T" above "C O L L E G E" and a green shield emblem with a white 'G' and a lion.
Chancellor	A multi-campus district or an entire statewide system	Reports district Board of Trustees State Chancellor reports to Board of Governors	 G C GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT The logo for Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, featuring a green square with a white 'G' and a blue circle with a white 'C' above the text "GROSSMONT-CUYAMACA" and "COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT".
Superintendent/President	A single-college district	Reports to the district's Board of Trustees	 MIRACOSTA COLLEGE The logo for MiraCosta College, featuring a stylized blue and green wave graphic above the text "MIRACOSTA" and "COLLEGE".



# CEO & CBO PARTNERSHIP

The CEO–CBO relationship serves as a cornerstone of institutional success, evolving significantly over time to meet changing educational and financial challenges.

1

## OLD STYLE

Authoritarian, transactional, finance-focused relationships with limited strategic collaboration and information sharing

2

## CURRENT DAY

Strategic, collaborative, transparent, adaptive partnerships that drive student and institutional success

3

## FUTURE

Shared leadership in innovation, equity, and sustainability initiatives



**Essential Elements:** Trust, transparency, clear communication, and joint vision are fundamental to successful CEO-CBO partnerships in today's complex educational environment.



# CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM



California  
Community  
Colleges

73

COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
DISTRICTS

116

COLLEGES

15

BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
MEMBERS

The California Community College system represents the largest higher education system in the United States, serving millions of students across the state through a comprehensive network of districts and colleges.





# COMMUNITY COLLEGES FRONT AND CENTER

Community colleges must remain central in education, workforce, and policy conversations at both state and national levels.

## REPRESENTING THE BROADER SYSTEM

### WHAT WE SHARE

- Common mission and values across districts
- Shared commitment to student success
- Similar operational challenges and opportunities

### MANAGING TENSIONS

- Multi-college vs. single-college district needs
- Regional differences: urban vs. suburban contexts
- Balancing local needs with system-wide priorities



# VOICES IN STATEWIDE GOVERNANCE

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

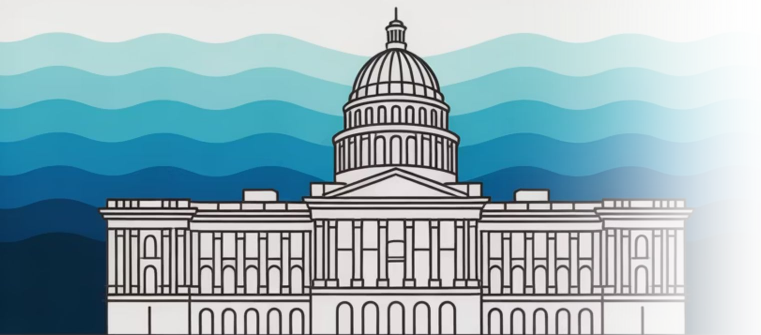
Local level includes college (and district, where applicable) governance structure with the final authority resting in locally elected boards.

## CONSULTATION COUNCIL

Includes ACBO, ACCCA, ACHRO, CCCAOE, CIO, CSSO, NACCE, trustees, CEOs, unions, students, Academic Senate, and Chancellor's Office

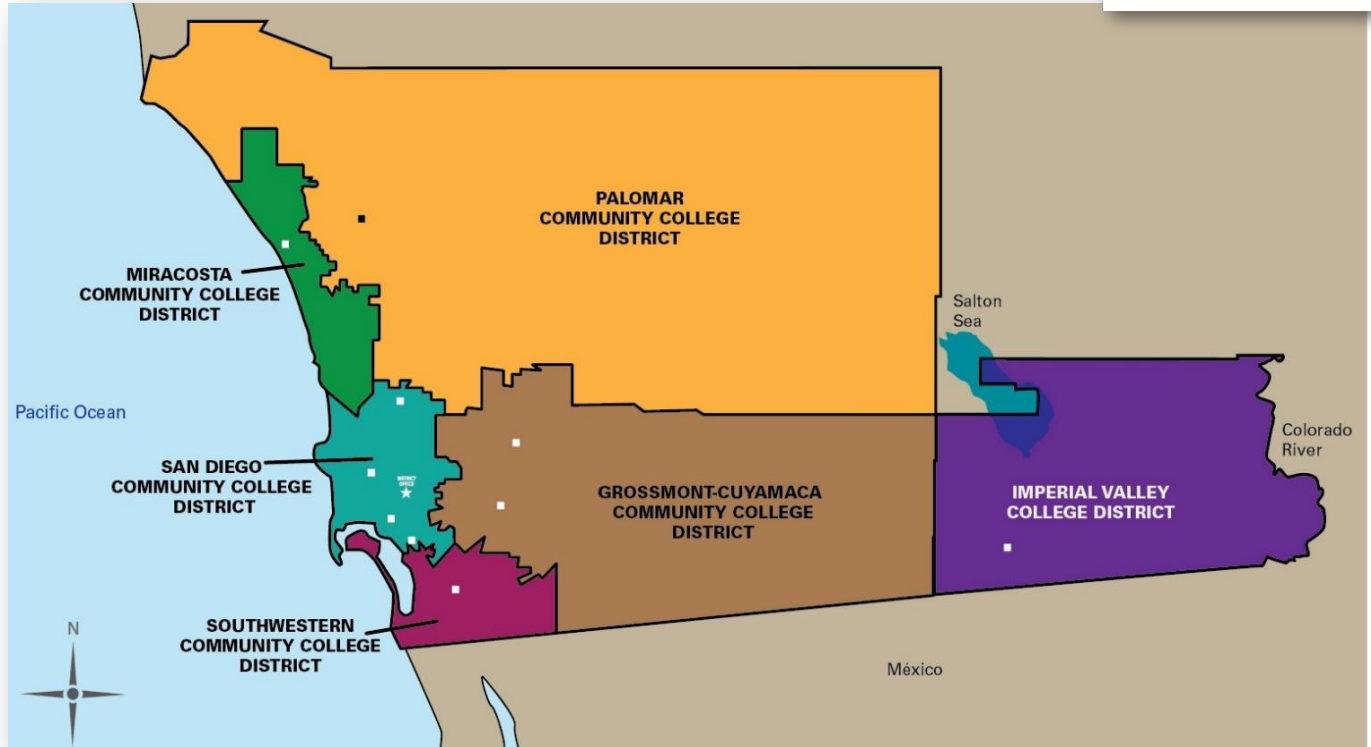
## BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPRESENTATION

Faculty, trustees, classified staff, and students are appointed - NO CEO on BOG



# Levels of Engagement

- 1  
**Cuyamaca College**
- 2  
**Grossmont College**
- 3  
**Imperial Valley College**
- 4  
**MiraCosta College**
- 5  
**Palomar College**
- 6  
**San Diego City College**
- 7  
**San Diego Mesa College**
- 8  
**San Diego Miramar College**
- 9  
**San Diego Continuing Education**
- 10  
**Southwestern College**



# COMMUNITY COLLEGE IMPACT ON OUR REGIONAL ECONOMY

The economic impact of our ten community colleges extends far beyond education, driving significant economic growth and opportunity throughout the region.

**175,000**

**STUDENTS SERVED**

Across all ten institutions

**\$10B**

**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Annual contribution to regional  
economy

**11,300**

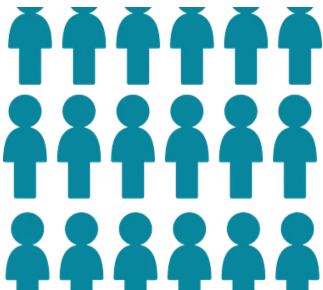
**EMPLOYEES**

Working at 10 community colleges

**50%**

**LOW INCOME STUDENTS**

Providing access and opportunity



\*Approximate numbers.



# STATE LEADERSHIP

Community colleges play a pivotal role in regional workforce development, adapting to meet the evolving needs of employers and students alike.

01

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## **STRONG WORKFORCE TASK FORCE**

Established in 2015 and continuing today, this initiative has transformed how community colleges approach workforce education

03

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## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CA**

District Advocacy, Governance, Professional Development, District Services  
Governed by CEO Board, Trustee Board & League Board

02

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## **REGIONAL ORGANIZATION**

Collaborative efforts across Strong Workforce regions and SDICCCA districts create comprehensive support networks



# NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

**1,100+**

Community Colleges

**32**

Board Members

**7**

Years of Service



**Federal  
Advocacy**



**Professional  
Development**



**Board  
Service**



**Leadership  
Progression**

# LEADERSHIP WISDOM

Effective leadership in community college administration requires balancing ambition with practicality. Success comes not from taking on every opportunity, but from choosing the right opportunities and executing them with excellence.

## **Integrity is Paramount**

- Mission Focused
- Transparency
- Public Organization
- Taxpayer Dollars

## **Pace Yourself**

Take on what you can manage well. Sustainable leadership requires strategic prioritization and realistic goal-setting.

- ❑ Remember: Quality over quantity. Your institution and students are better served by focused, well-executed initiatives than by overextension and burnout.



# Questions?

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