



President's Weekly Report

August 21, 2020

HARTNELL COLLEGE

Mission:

Focusing on the education and workforce development needs of communities in the Salinas Valley, Hartnell College strengthens communities by providing opportunities for students to reach career and/or academic goals (associate degrees, certificates of achievement, transfer to four-year institutions) in an environment committed to student learning, achievement and success.

Note to readers:

The President's Weekly Report to the Community has moved to twice-monthly publication while the volume of news is slower due to COVID-19 restrictions. Thanks for reading!

Virtual Convocation is great success, thanks to participants and planners

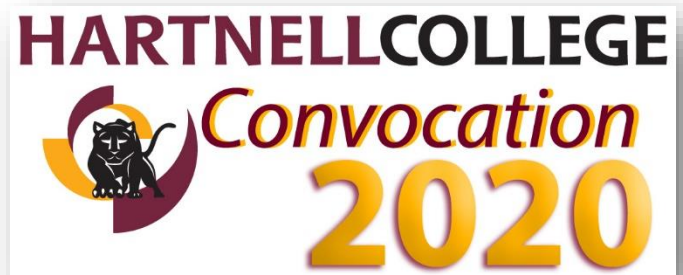
On Aug. 21, a cross-campus team led by Vice President Dr. Cathryn Wilkinson did an excellent job in presenting a Fall 2020 Convocation program via [YouTube](#) and Zoom, instead of in the Mainstage Theater, as it has been in recent years.

We were welcomed by Aurelio Salazar Jr. a proud Hartnell graduate and president of the Hartnell Community College District Governing Board. He shared his experience as an anxious freshman, encouraged and guided by so many at our college.

Salazar thanked the hundreds of faculty and staff who joined by computer and smartphone. "I and the board appreciate all the work that you're doing and the impact you're having on students' lives," he said. "They look up to you because you're laying down a foundation for their future."

I followed up by highlighting some of Hartnell's recent successes and our priorities for the months ahead, including anti-racism efforts and preparations for a return to campus when possible. I noted the truly impressive work that occurred in March when Hartnell made a sudden transition to online teaching and support. I view that as a minor miracle because it required so much work in such a short time – and yet it all came off fairly seamlessly based on everything I've heard.

The entire Convocation program was valuable and productive. Of special importance was the opportunity for faculty within various academic areas to begin aligning their course requirements within five Meta-Majors which this year will begin guiding students toward successful careers.



Dr. Wilkinson offered heartfelt thanks to more than 50 individuals in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs who joined to produce the virtual event, especially Career Technical Education Dean Clint Cowden, who built the Canvas shell that made the day possible. "Truly, we have something special here at Hartnell," she said.

We share concern for colleagues affected by Salinas-area blazes

As I wrote in an Aug. 19 email to the entire Hartnell family, I realize we have all watched with increasing alarm as fire crews battle stubborn, dangerous fires in Monterey County and elsewhere around the Central Coast.

We are especially concerned for Hartnell employees and students, and their families, whose homes and property are potentially threatened by the enormous River Fire southeast of Salinas, and whose lives have been disrupted by evacuations. Information on the status of the fire and evacuation areas is available [here](#).

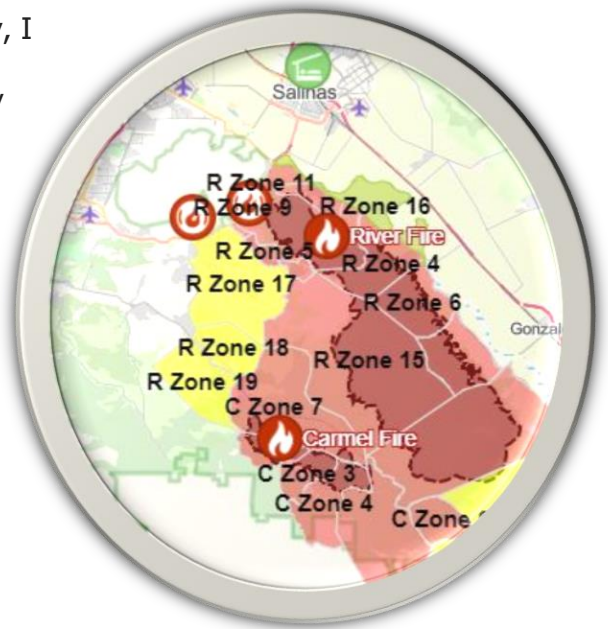
I know I speak for everyone at Hartnell when I say we are keeping you and all those affected in our thoughts and in our hearts.

Dr. Rodríguez gets first look at Alisal Campus during Aug. 7 tour

I was pleased to be joined by Hartnell Governing Board Trustee Candi DePauw on Aug. 10 for my first visit to the Alisal Campus.

Dean Clint Cowden, Assistant Dean Sharon Albert and several staff and faculty participated in the tour. They emphasized the support and involvement of the local agricultural industry, both as program advisors and through financial support.

Advanced Automotive Technology instructors Pete Escoto and Valentin Rodriguez explained how they had adapted to teaching online. We also talked about student success and job placement, including the automotive program's remarkable Toyota training partnership. I toured the Welding and Manufacturing shops, where instructor Eric Painter showed us the welding simulators and mechatronics trainers. All are working



hard to maintain our students' momentum toward graduation despite the challenges of COVID-19.

I loved the campus architecture, and I was deeply impressed by the faculty and their dedication. Overall, I was struck by the Salinas Valley's commitment to Career Technical Education at Hartnell.

President's Task Force Funding Plan moves forward with board approval

With a unanimous vote on Aug. 11, the Hartnell Governing Board adopted a new President's Task Force plan to establish external funding priorities and plans over the next several years.



I am grateful for the work of the task force, made up of community members and college employees, under the direction of the Hartnell College Foundation and its executive director, Jackie Cruz, who is also vice president of advancement and development.

The group met three times in February and March to review and rank a list of college needs identified by students, faculty and staff. They helped determine which are most likely to attract community support.

The six funding areas are: Innovative Programs and Accelerated Completion, Student Success, Salinas Valley Stem Programs, Intercollegiate Athletics, the Arts, Expansion of Higher Education and Digital Equity.

Dr. Yahdi will lead STEM programs as former dean Bliss steps aside

Dr. Mohammed Yahdi is now interim dean of academic, with responsibilities in the STEM academic areas (Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), as well as K-12 STEM, MESA and STEM internships. Many thanks to the committee who assisted in this search, under the leadership of Dean Daniel Teresa.

Dr. Yahdi has been a mathematics instructor at Hartnell College since 2014. His appointment here was preceded by many years at Ursinus College near Philadelphia, where he rose from assistant professor to full professor of math and chair of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. He has been recognized with an endowed chair for his significant contributions to the enhancement of teaching of college mathematics and with a



faculty recognition award, an excellence in advising and mentoring award, distinguished teaching award and excellence in scholarship award.

Dr. Yahdi has developed, collaborated in and implemented \$9 million in grant-funded projects at Hartnell, including serving as the principal investigator for projects to improve undergraduate education in STEM, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). He served as a co-lead for the Hartnell Entering Students Team for Guided Pathways/College ReDesign, and with faculty colleagues for the implementation of AB705, which removed barriers to student placement in transfer-level courses.

Dr. Yahdi holds a doctorate and a master's in Mathematics from the University of Paris 6 (Sorbonne), as well as a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Physics from the University of Rabat (Morocco) and an Advanced Degree in Film and Audiovisual Studies from University of Paris 7. He is widely published in the research areas of abstract mathematics and the nexus of mathematics and biology.

His selection for the new role was preceded by a decision by former dean Dr. Shannon Bliss to step away after seven years in the position, during which she oversaw the opening of the STEM Center and a surge of STEM-related activity both on our campuses and in area schools.

Bliss, who was thanked by many colleagues during a Zoom conference on Aug. 10, will continue in a part-time capacity to support Hartnell's MESA and science internship programs. She has made an enormous contribution to our students.

Shimabukuro is top assistant coach in cross country and track for 2019

Rachel Shimabukuro, a former Hartnell runner and now an assistant women's coach for the Panthers, has been recognized as the 2019 California Community College Cross Country and Track and Field Association Assistant Coach of the Year.

She was chosen by all cross country and track head coaches across the state. The award is given to one assistant coach for both the men's and women's programs, based on dedication to their team, being a role model and overall team success.

Shimabukuro is beginning her fourth year as an assistant for both Hartnell cross country and track, having joined the staff in 2017. During her time with the Panthers, the women's cross-country team has won three consecutive Coast Conference titles, claimed the Northern California championship in 2018 and 2019 and second place in 2017, and finished in the top four at the state championship for three straight years, including second place in 2018.



"She brings personal experience as a community college student-athlete and serves as a positive role model for young women at Hartnell College and in our community," said Chris Zepeda, Hartnell's head coach for men's and women's track and cross country.

Shimabukuro learned of the award following an announcement on Aug. 11. She said she didn't see it coming: "My initial reaction was, 'Whoa!' That's the best way I can put it." Read her full story [here](#).

Measure T work advances in Salinas and at King City and Soledad centers

Completed demolition of the Building E restrooms during the week of Aug. 14 signals is one of many milestones as work continues on Hartnell's Main Campus in Salinas and at the education centers in Soledad and King City.



While framing begins on all three floors of Building E, one of the classroom-administration buildings on Main Campus, wayfinding signage will be installed on its twin, Building D, where classroom modernization is complete. Attachment of a brick façade to the new elevator shaft on Building D (at left) is pending, and an elevator company will take initial steps toward installation of the operating hardware. Final concrete work on the central plaza will begin soon. The entire structure of the nursing and health sciences building is now visible (below).

At the new Soledad Education Center, work is focused on closing the building envelope, with installation of metal roofing set to start in the coming week. Mechanical, plumbing and electrical work continues on the interior.

In King City, where expansion is doubling the size of the existing center, new windows passed their test and roof insulation is being installed.



MPF grant will strengthen centers' outreach to underserved students

Hartnell has received a \$100,000 grant from the Monterey Peninsula Foundation to better serve students through its new education center in Soledad and the expanded center in King City.

The centers will be outfitted with equipment for video streaming, enabling students to access a broader range of courses without having to travel to the main campus. These efforts will provide a reliable, accessible means for traditionally underserved students to pursue higher education, thereby addressing digital equity and education gaps across the Hartnell district.



In addition, the grant recognizes the role the new centers will play as a hub of information about financial aid and such programs as the Salinas Valley Promise, with its combination of free tuition and life-skills training.

Although this grant is specifically intended to support the two South County centers, scheduled to open in Spring 2021, future funding would also support the Castroville Education Center, scheduled to open in Spring 2022.

Students' Cat ID cards go digital as COVID-19 spurs more innovation

Another way COVID-19 is changing the lives of Hartnell students is adoption of an electronic identification system this academic year in lieu of physical cards.

The electronic ID will be managed on the Hartnell website and viewed virtually with a downloadable app called Touchnet One Card.

Students were instructed on Aug. 20 to enter their personal information and upload a photo into the [Cat Card](#) system. Students will be able to manage their electronic ID card at that site or use it on their smartphone via the app.



Panther Bookstore announces hours and guidance for fall

Lashanta Mitchell, manager of the Panther Bookstore on Hartnell's Main Campus reminds students and employees about the store's hours and its plan to continue curbside pickup during the Fall 2020 semester, which starts Aug. 24.

The store remains closed to the public and is only offering curbside pickup. There will be no in-store shopping this semester.

Hours for the first two weeks of classes will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday. The store will close for Labor Day on Sept. 4. Summer hours will resume starting Sept. 14: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.

To help with physical distancing and overcrowding in the small Homestead Avenue parking lot, customers are asked to arrive only after they are notified their order is ready for pickup. Also, customers are reminded to remain in their cars, and staff will bring their orders out.



2x4 BASH plumbs life under COVID and underscores Black Lives Matter

The Western Stage Theatre Company's 2x4 BASH series drew an engaged online audience for its Aug. 14 presentation of "A 2020 Survival Guide," which included a segment in which 19- to 29-year-old cast members and their family and friends shared personal perspectives on the Black Lives Matter movement.



Among the many skits about coping with a pandemic was one titled "Grocery Shopping," which featured actor Larisa Palanuik (pictured) in an extended telephone conversation with Erick Rico on the state of her disrupted lifestyle.

Actor and former Hartnell student-athlete Drew Davis-Wheeler (at right), who is now working in the film industry, described how he had foreseen the impact of a tragedy like the death of George Floyd during the

pandemic: "Now that COVID-19 has hit, all of my worst fears are coming true. Everything is risky now. ... All things considered, life has not gotten any worse for me. I cannot say the same for the human race."



Although there was no charge to watch the 90-minute program, viewers were encouraged to donate to a Black Resilience Fund. Directors Niki Moon and Jon Selover each shared an epilogue. The presentation can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

Non-traditional students share their journey to 2020 graduation

Two graduates in Hartnell's Class of 2020, non-traditional students Sofia Garza Guzman and Gloria Herrera, recently shared accounts of their continuing educational journeys. Their full stories are linked below to the Hartnell website.

When [Sofia Garza Guzman](#) graduated from Hartnell on May 29, she was among 17 valedictorians with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

Motivated by a belief in education instilled in her as a child in Mexico, the former fieldworker has come a long way since she took her first course in English as a second language at the Salinas Adult School in 2010.

Garza completed an Associate of Arts for Transfer degrees in Spanish and History, as well as two Associate of Arts degrees – in Liberal Arts, with an emphasis in political science, and General Studies, with an emphasis in Language and Rationality.

She will transfer to Cal State Monterey Bay this month, with the goal of becoming a middle or high school Spanish teacher, helping students like herself.



When [Gloria Herrera](#) moved from Mexico to the United States seven years ago with her husband and three children, she was the only one in the family who knew any English.

Today, her daughter has just completed a bachelor's degree, a son is progressing toward his degree, and another son is preparing to attend Hartnell College this fall.

Following their example, Herrera graduated from Hartnell on May 29 with associate degrees in early childhood education and liberal arts. She intends to continue on and earn a bachelor's degree in the near future.

Herrera said she has been inspired by her children's success: "They've accomplished a lot. If they did, why couldn't I?"

UC-Berkeley invites Native students to seek help with transfer application

The Indigenous and Native Coalition at the University of California, Berkeley is sharing information with Hartnell students and employees about an Aug. 31 application deadline for its Natives Transcending Program.

The program, considered the first of its kind, is designed to assist and support students interested in transferring to UC Berkeley or other UC schools. During the weekend of Nov 6-8, selected students will receive multiple coaching and writing feedback sessions in how to respond to personal insight questions and present themselves in the transfer application. Due to COVID-19, all the engagement will be virtual.



Application information is on the university's Native American Student Development [website](#). Students will be notified by Sept. 7. The minimum GPA requirement is 3.0.

Ledesma family welcomes new baby girl Alianna

Hartnell Warehouse Technician Joel Ledesma-Calderon and his wife, Emily Ledesma, welcomed a new daughter, Alianna Anahi Ledesma, on May 30. She was 19 inches and 5 pounds, 8 ounces at birth.

Ledesma-Calderon shared the news and this photo on Aug. 12 and reported, "She is very cute, and she's been a good girl – and she lets us sleep the whole night."



In the News

Hartnell College to hold physical activity classes online:

<https://kion546.com/health/coronavirus/2020/08/12/hartnell-college-to-hold-physical-activity-classes-online/>

Upcoming Events

Note: All in-person campus events are cancelled until further notice in compliance with a statewide shelter-in-place order.

Spring 2021 Transfer Application Workshop

8:30-11:30 p.m. and 3-6 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 25

[Register](#)

Hartnell Governing Board – Regular Meeting

5 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 1

Steinbeck Hall (Building C)

Hartnell Governing Board – Board Development Meeting

5 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Steinbeck Hall (Building C)

Hartnell Governing Board – Board Development Meeting

5 p.m.

Tuesday, Oct. 6

Steinbeck Hall (Building C)