



**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!

## CCLC recognizes Hartnell grad with 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award

Luz Garcia, a physician's assistant and founder of the Gonzales Medical Center and Ultrasound Center, will be honored Nov. 18 as one of three California Community College graduates to receive the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award from the Community College League of California (CCLC) during its virtual convention.

Garcia was nominated for the award by Dr. Cathryn Wilkinson, vice president of academic affairs. She is a sister of Jackie Cruz, vice president of advancement and development and executive director of the Hartnell College Foundation. In announcing the award, the CCLC praised Garcia's "unstoppable drive to bring health care to underserved communities."

"She continues to advocate for local students to become medical professionals, just like she did, against all odds," the CCLC said.

Coming from a Salinas farmworker family unable to prioritize higher education, Garcia became a physician's assistant. She persevered despite having to turn down a full-ride scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley as a high school honors student. She was compelled to put her dream of medical school on hold after giving birth to a premature baby as a high school senior.



“Luckily, Hartnell College was there for me,” Garcia said in her prerecorded acceptance speech for the award. “I enrolled in Hartnell and continued to pursue my goal of becoming a medical professional.”

After Hartnell, she earned a degree in biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1997, completed a post-baccalaureate program at the University of California, Davis medical school in 2001 and earned her physician assistant certification from Stanford University Medical School in 2007.

Added Garcia, “The community college faculty and staff played a major role in making it possible for me to further my education and serve the community as a medical professional.”

## STEM Internship Program hails student success despite COVID

Hartnell College celebrated the 14th year of its STEM Internship Program – the nation’s largest at the community college level – on Nov. 13 by highlighting many of the real-world, hands-on internship experiences that involved 285 students over the past year.

Shared via Zoom, the event took the place of an on-campus STEM internship symposium, which could not be held this year because of COVID-19. A [webpage](#) featuring summaries of students’ research will be officially launched.

Members of a five-student panel discussed their research and learning during full eight- to 10-week internships and 25-hour micro-internships with such partners as Food Origins, the California Space Consortium and the ACCESS program in research science at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The panel moderator was math instructor Brian Palmer, a leading faculty advocate of STEM internships.



Among the panelists was 2020 graduate Maria Tavares (pictured upper right), who is now attending the University of California, Los Angeles, where she is studying molecular, cellular and developmental biology, after completing four internships while at Hartnell. She is considering seeking both a medical degree and a doctorate.

“The internship program at Hartnell College played a very key role in the career path I am following right now,” Tavares said, “because it exposed me to research. I didn’t know I was interested in research until I actually got involved with the internship program.”

A total of 63 Hartnell students completed full internships during the 2019-20 academic year, including this past summer. Each intern worked with a mentor, some of whom were Hartnell faculty and staff, and others were provided by outside internship partners.

Subjects for internships featured on the new webpage range from GPS-based analysis of strawberry harvest, full-depth reclamation of Monterey County roads, development of a solar-powered weather station and genome mapping of an invasive alga.



In a prelude to webpage launch, on Nov. 4

Hartnell presented the annual Andy Newton Partner Award to Food Origins, a Salinas-based agricultural data analysis firm, in recognition of the company's ongoing engagement with Hartnell student interns, including hiring some for full-time jobs. Company CEO Nathan Dorn received the honor at his Salinas office. Past recipients have included IBM, the Naval Postgraduate School and the USDA. (Pictured: Dorn, center, with Shannon Bliss and Brian Palmer)



Shannon Bliss (pictured), who coordinated the internship program for a seventh year as an outgoing dean of STEM, said the 2019-20 year proved to be "an interesting endeavor" as the onset of COVID-19 limited face-to-face opportunities.

"The staff worked really hard to make sure there was a variety of opportunities to students, and the students worked really hard to complete their projects," Bliss said.

## **'Let's Talk' virtual chat features vets in honor of Veterans Day**

Gemma Uribe-Cruz, Hartnell counselor for student veterans, used the Student Affairs virtual information program "Let's Talk" to share the perspective of veteran alums and a current veteran student during a Veteran Students Success Panel on Nov. 12. Her co-hosts were counselors Gabriela Lopez and Jasmine Rios.

Uribe-Cruz (pictured upper left) has been a primary host of the live-stream program that she helped establish following the move to online instruction last spring. The online event was a departure from the Hartnell Veterans Service Center's traditional participation in the Veteran's Day Parade in Oldtown Salinas, canceled this year because of COVID-19.

Instead, Uribe-Cruz interviewed student Phillip Christmas, an Army veteran and vice president of the Veterans Club, and three former veteran students, Erika Garcia, Ryan Sparks and Juanita Martinez.

She described veteran students as "an amazing population" that "enhances the student learning experience in our classrooms and for our other students and our instructors as well."



Christmas (pictured lower center), who is studying business administration and plans to transfer to Cal State Monterey Bay and pursue a career in accounting, said it took him a while to become active with other veteran students.

"But then eventually I just felt a part of it, and I'm grateful I did," he said. "I met a lot of great people. They are very motivating people. They'll keep you on track."

## **Panther teams receive OK for limited conditioning work**

Hartnell student-athletes have the go-ahead to begin on-campus conditioning while awaiting final decisions on whether fall and spring sports teams will be able to compete this coming spring.

Dan Teresa, dean of academic affairs for athletics, physical education and kinesiology, has informed students and their families that conditioning will be allowed under highly controlled circumstances, including temperature checks, small groups, physical distancing and no use of shared equipment.

Teresa also announced a Nov. 6 decision by the California Community College Athletic Association Board of Directors to let student-athletes carry forward this year's athletic



eligibility, no matter how much they are able to compete in 2020-21.

The start of practices and games for fall sports, now planned for January-February, will depend on a go-ahead from the Monterey County Health Department and an assessment of relative risk by college leadership, including the superintendent/president. At this point, traditional spring sports, which are all non-contact, are scheduled to begin in March.

## **Building D elevator is finished; interiors progress in South County**

At Hartnell's Main Campus in Salinas, the exterior elevator on Building D is complete, and its brick façade is nearly finished. Following its approval by elevator inspectors, work will then start on a new interior elevator in Building E. The Center for Nursing and Health Sciences is also progressing well, with metal stud framing and roughing-in of plumbing, electrical and fire sprinkler systems to continue this month.



The new Soledad Education Center and the center expansion in King City (pictured) appear largely complete on the outside, as finishing work on electrical, mechanical, IT and fire systems continues in Soledad, and ceiling grids and door hardware are being installed in King City (pictured), along with casework in the two science labs.

Site work continues on the Castroville Education Center, with installation of underground utilities and trenching for footings underway through Thanksgiving.

## **Student Ruby Romero shares story of opportunity, growth at Hartnell**

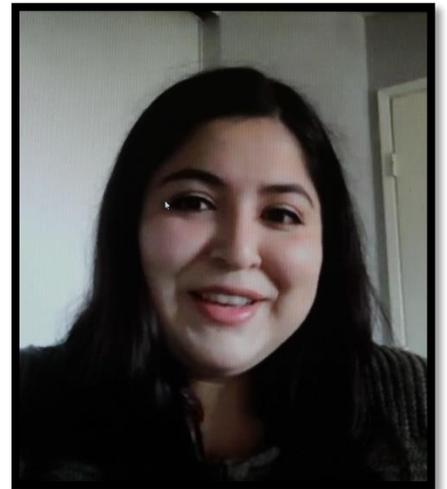
Ruby Romero, a 2018 graduate of Soledad High School who is double majoring in agricultural business and plant science at Hartnell, shared her story with the Hartnell College Foundation (HCF) Strategic Planning Committee via Zoom on Nov. 13.

Now in her second year at Hartnell, Romero started at a four-year university before transferring to Hartnell because of personal circumstances, a decision she said has “really helped me overcome many obstacles.”

“The moment I began at Hartnell, I realized how welcoming the community, the faculty and the students really are,” she said.

Romero is serving this year as Alisal Campus senator for the Associate Students of Hartnell College and vice president of the Ag Ambassadors Club, along with being a student worker for the Career Prep and Placement Office, also at Alisal. She benefited from an emergency assistance grant from the COVID-19 Student Emergency Response Fund, organized by the HCF.

Romero plans to graduate this spring and transfer to California State University, Chico, with a goal of teaching agriculture at the high school level in the Salinas Valley. “Due to my experience at Hartnell,” she said, “I really want to come back and teach in the community. I’d love to come back and give back to the place that has supported so much support for me.”



## Coach McKown is a new dad

Swim and Dive Team Head Coach Joel McKown's wife, Jenna, gave birth to their first child, daughter Jade Sierra, at 11:39 a.m. on Nov. 4. She was 7.1 pounds and 19.5 inches at birth.

"Both mom and baby are doing great," McKown said, "and we are so happy with our little Panther."



## In the News

**Long-time Western Stage artistic director retiring:**

<https://www.montereyherald.com/2020/11/09/long-time-western-stage-artistic-director-retiring/>

## Upcoming Events

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

**Hartnell Governing Board – Regular Meeting**

5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 17

Steinbeck Hall (Building C)

**Pop-Up Pantry Food Distribution**

12 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 20  
Hartnell Parking Structure  
Information: 831-755-6734

**Pop-Up Pantry Food Distribution**

12 p.m.  
Friday, Dec. 4  
Hartnell Parking Structure  
Information: 831-755-6734

**Hartnell Governing Board – Regular/Annual Organizational Meeting**

5 p.m.  
Tuesday, Dec. 15  
Steinbeck Hall (Building C)

**Pop-Up Pantry Food Distribution**

12 p.m.  
Friday, Dec. 18  
Hartnell Parking Structure  
Information: 831-755-6734