



SEPTEMBER | 2026

VENTURA COLLEGE | VCCCD TRUSTEES PRESIDENT'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Ventura College's Commitment to Veteran and Military-Connected Students

Ventura College is committed to supporting veterans, active-duty service members, members of the National Guard and Reserve, and military-connected spouses and dependents. Through the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) and campuswide partnerships, students receive coordinated assistance with veterans' education benefits, enrollment certification, educational planning, priority registration, financial aid, academic support, basic needs, and referrals to campus and community resources. This coordinated approach helps reduce barriers, strengthen belonging, and support progress toward degrees, certificates, transfer, and career goals.

Veteran Student Data

During the 2025-2026 academic year, Ventura College served 386 veteran students. Forty-nine veterans earned a degree or certificate, and 36 veterans transferred from Ventura College to a four-year university.

386 VETERAN STUDENTS served in 25-2026	49 GRADUATES earned a degree or certificate	36 TRANSFERS continued to a four-year university	\$3.06M FINANCIAL AID awarded to veteran students
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Navy Veteran Damon Marin celebrates
at the 2026 Veterans Resource Center
Graduation Dinner Celebration

2020-21 to 2024-25
**TOP FIVE
MAJORS**
Among Ventura College
Veteran Students

RANK MAJOR

- 1** Engineering, General
- 2** General Studies, Natural Science Pattern 2/3
- 3** Criminal Justice
- 4** Business Administration
- 4** Business Management

VETERANS

114
95
80
79
79



Veterans Resource Center: Coordinated, Individualized Support

The Ventura College Veterans Resource Center provides a centralized point of support for veterans, active-duty service members, members of the National Guard and Reserve, and military-connected spouses and dependents. Students receive individualized assistance with veterans' education benefits, enrollment certification, educational planning, priority registration, financial aid, and connections to campus and community resources. This coordinated support helps students navigate benefit requirements and address challenges that could interrupt their education.

Veterans Counselor Vanessa Chacon assists student veterans with completing and updating the educational plans required to access their benefits. For Fall 2026, Program Coordinator Elizabeth Rubalcava has onboarded more than 65 students who are newly using veterans' education benefits. Rubalcava and Office Assistant Maureen Sheldon also provide benefits-related guidance and connect students with academic counseling, financial aid, basic needs, Student Health and Wellness Services, and the Educational Assistance Center.

VRC IMPACT

More than 65 students who are newly using veterans' education benefits were onboarded for Fall 2026, strengthening their connection to academic planning, benefit certification, and campus support from the start of the semester.

Fall 2026 Outreach, Connection, and Well-Being

The VRC began the fall semester with outreach and engagement activities designed to connect students with Ventura College and with one another. On August 19, Program Coordinator Elizabeth Rubalcava represented Ventura College in the California Transition Assistance Program at Naval Base Ventura County in Port Hueneme. Transitioning service members received information about college enrollment, academic programs, veterans' education benefits, and student support services.

The VRC also hosted a Fall Welcome Back event on August 20 and launched Rally Point: Vet Connect, a recurring collaboration with Student Health and Wellness Services focused on community, camaraderie, and well-being.

Fall programming will include collaborations with the Ventura County Veterans Service Office, the Jimmy Miller Memorial Foundation, and Ventura College Financial Aid, along with an information session focused on Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits. Students will have access to claims and appeals guidance, ocean therapy, financial aid assistance, priority registration support, and information about education and employment services. Each program addresses a different part of the student experience, from navigating benefits and preparing for the next semester to building community and supporting overall well-being.



Financial Aid Support for Veteran Students

A Dedicated Financial Aid Veterans Liaison

Financial Aid Specialist Micsin Martinez serves as Ventura College's dedicated Veterans Liaison. Martinez works directly with veteran students and their dependents and collaborates closely with the VRC to provide individualized assistance with financial aid requirements and available resources. Having a designated liaison gives students a familiar, consistent point of contact and helps create a more welcoming and accessible financial aid experience.

Support includes assistance with the FAFSA and California Dream Act Application, financial aid file completion, eligibility and disbursement questions, federal and state grants, Satisfactory Academic Progress questions and appeals, student loans, emergency grants, and referrals for VA-related financial aid questions. Students may receive support in person, by phone, by email, or virtually.

VRC Partnership and Outreach

During the 2025-2026 academic year, Financial Aid participated in 14 VRC outreach and engagement events. These included Money Mondays during Fall 2025, the VRC Resource Fair, dedicated Financial Aid Assistance events during Spring 2026, and other outreach designed to make financial aid information more accessible to veteran students and their dependents. This ongoing partnership has established a more consistent Financial Aid presence within the VRC and strengthened communication between the two areas.

Veterans Resource Center Emergency Grant

Financial Aid partners with the Veterans Resource Center and the Ventura College Foundation to support the Veterans Resource Center Emergency Grant. The grant provides financial assistance to eligible veteran and military-connected students experiencing an emergency that may interfere with their ability to continue their education. Students can relate to financial support and additional resources to address immediate needs and support continued enrollment and educational progress.

\$3,064,850.76 AWARDED

During the 2025-2026 academic year, Ventura College veteran students received more than \$3.06 million in financial aid, providing significant support in addition to veterans' educational benefits.



Campuswide Support for Veteran Student Success

Tutoring Center

The Ventura College Tutoring Center provides free, accessible academic support throughout the year. In 2025-2026, 49 veteran students used Tutoring Center services for a total of 588 visits. Each participating veteran student visited an average of 12 times, demonstrating consistent engagement with academic support. Personalized tutoring, drop-in assistance, and a welcoming learning environment help students strengthen academic skills, build confidence, and remain on track toward their educational goals.

Basic Needs Center

The Basic Needs Center helps veteran and military-connected students address non-academic barriers that may affect enrollment and academic progress. Available services include the Pirates Cove Food Pantry, CalFresh application assistance, housing referrals, Student Emergency Grants, free Ventura County bus transportation with a valid VC student ID, hygiene supplies and clothing through the Treasure Chest Boutique, Medi-Cal application assistance, Care Room access, mental health referrals, and connections to additional campus and community resources.

In 2025-2026, 50 veteran students visited the Basic Needs Center at least once, accounting for 512 total visits and an average of 10.2 visits per student. The Basic Needs team also collaborates with the VRC through workshops, resource fairs, and outreach activities. Staff supporting these efforts include Program Coordinator II Oscar Rivera, Basic Needs Specialists Maria Crisosto Calderon and Vanessa Velazquez, and the broader Basic Needs team.



Admissions and Records

Admissions and Records supports veteran and military-connected students throughout their educational journey by providing accurate enrollment services, timely certification support, and responsive assistance. In collaboration with the VRC and campus partners, the office helps students with enrollment processes, residency and registration questions, academic record maintenance, graduation evaluation, and degree and certificate completion. This student-centered support helps remove administrative barriers for students who may also be balancing work, family, and service-related responsibilities.

Flexible Access Through Distance Education

Ventura College's Distance Education program provides flexible online learning options for student veterans, active-duty personnel, reservists, and military families balancing education with work, family, or service obligations. Through Canvas, students have access to instruction, course announcements, interactive learning activities, assessments, and ongoing communication.

Key Distance Education Initiatives

Dedicated VRC Canvas shell. For more than a decade, Ventura College has maintained a dedicated Veterans Resource Center Canvas shell. This online hub gives remote and hybrid students access to specialized support, academic counseling, VA and CalVet education benefit updates, mentorship, and virtual community engagement.

Student orientation and learning resources. Customized resources and training are embedded in the Ventura College Student Orientation, helping veteran students prepare for online coursework and navigate campus digital platforms.

Consistent, quality-driven course design. Standardized course templates and specialized faculty training support accessible, structured Canvas course environments, which can be especially helpful for students transitioning back into academic settings.

Comprehensive virtual assistance. Canvas support, text messaging, virtual drop-in hours, and online faculty and student technical support extend access beyond the physical campus.

Distance Education support is provided by Instructional Technologist Designers Matthew Moore, Ali Olson Pacheco, Sharon Oxford, and Margaret Phelps, with assistance from student workers Jahmere James and Marcelo Mendoza.



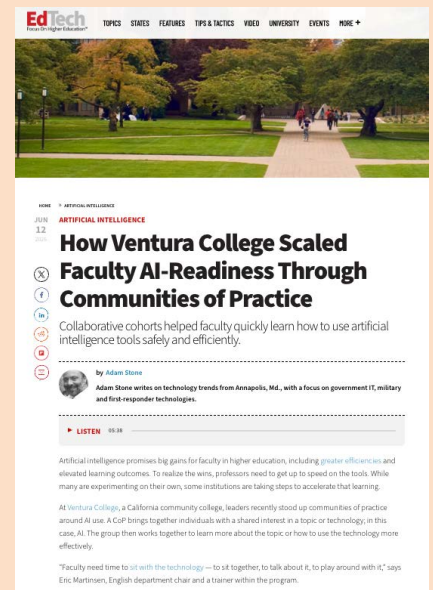
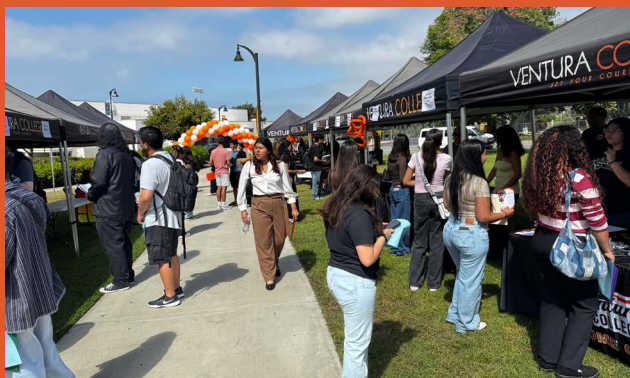
A CAMPUSWIDE COMMITMENT

Together, the Veterans Resource Center and its campus partners provide a coordinated network of academic, financial, operational, basic needs, and wellness support. This approach recognizes the leadership, experience, and resilience veteran and military-connected students bring to Ventura College while helping them remain focused on their educational and career goals.

VENTURA COLLEGE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ventura College featured in EdTech Magazine

EdTech Magazine published an article about Ventura College on June 12, 2026, for its innovative work developing AI Faculty Communities of Practice to strengthen faculty readiness and support the responsible integration of artificial intelligence into teaching and learning. The article, [“How Ventura College Scaled Faculty AI-Readiness Through Communities of Practice,”](#) highlights the college’s collaborative train-the-trainer model, faculty cohorts, and practical professional learning approach, demonstrating how Ventura College has created a scalable model for building AI capacity across campus. This recognition reflects the college’s commitment to innovation, equity, and responsible implementation of emerging technologies while supporting faculty in preparing students for an increasingly AI-enabled world.



Fall 2026 Federal Work-Study (FWS) Outreach and Job Fair

Ventura College recently strengthened its Federal Work-Study (FWS) recruitment and hiring efforts through a collaborative campus initiative that brought together Financial Aid, the Career Center, and more than 26 hiring departments. The initiative included two workshops for hiring departments and supervisors, three student preparation workshops that provided 60 students with FWS guidance, resume support, and interview preparation, and a Federal Work-Study Job Fair held on July 30. The Job Fair brought approximately 180 students and more than 26 campus departments together, providing opportunities for departments to interview students and, in several cases, make immediate employment selections. The campus-wide effort has continued beyond the event as hiring paperwork is processed and students are placed into positions. This initiative demonstrates Ventura College’s commitment to connecting students with meaningful employment opportunities while providing departments with a well-prepared pool of student employees.



Our Ventura TV Interview

On August 5, 2026, President Lewis was featured as a guest on Our Ventura TV, a CAPS Media program highlighting people, organizations, and issues of interest to the local community. During the 15-minute in-studio interview, President Lewis discussed his professional background, his new role as President of Ventura College, and his vision and priorities for the year ahead. The conversation highlighted Ventura College's commitment to student success, the programs and opportunities available to students, and the College's role as an important educational and community resource. The interview provided an opportunity for President Lewis to introduce himself to the broader Ventura community and share his vision for the continued growth and success of Ventura College and its students. The interview is anticipated to air in mid September.

Radio Interviews

In August, President Lewis participated in radio interviews with Rico Rangel on 95.1 KBBY and Dave Daniels on 100.7 KHAY, providing an opportunity to introduce himself to the community and highlight the value of a Ventura College education. Conversations focused on why students should consider Ventura College, the affordability of community college and what families should know about college costs, career and technical education and other pathways for students who do not plan to pursue a four-year degree, and flexible scheduling options that allow students to balance work, family, and education. President Lewis also shared his vision for Ventura College, emphasizing the College's commitment to accessible, affordable, and high-quality educational opportunities that prepare students for successful careers, continued education, and meaningful contributions to the community. The longer-form interview, titled Cumulus Cares, aired across all four Cumulus Radio stations at 5:30 a.m. on Sunday, August 30.

Set Sail Event

On August 8, 2026, Ventura College welcomed 177 new and returning students to Set Sail, a campuswide morning of personalized assistance and connection. Students received support from Admissions, Counseling, Registration, and Financial Aid and had the opportunity to obtain their student identification cards. More than 49% of participating students accessed two or more service areas, demonstrating the value of bringing essential student services together in one convenient event. This year's Set Sail also included Canvas and Microsoft 365 assistance provided by Instructional Technology and Tutorial Services. KBBY radio joined the event with theme park giveaways, adding energy and excitement to the morning. Set Sail was a wonderful demonstration of campus-wide teamwork, camaraderie, and our shared commitment to student success.



WELCOME BACK DAYS



Ventura College had a blast welcoming new and returning Pirates to campus during Welcome Back Days on August 10–11, 2026. The event provided students with an opportunity to learn more about campus resources, student involvement opportunities, and the many ways they can connect at VC. Staff, faculty, and student leaders were on hand to help students find their classes, answer questions, and build connections across campus. It was a fun way to kick off the semester and help students feel welcomed, supported, and ready for a strong start to the fall semester.



Rotary Club of Fillmore

On Wednesday, August 12, 2026, President Lewis was officially welcomed and inducted as a member of the Rotary Club of Fillmore. Rotary brings together dedicated community and business leaders who share a commitment to service, leadership, and strengthening the communities they serve. President Lewis looks forward to building relationships with fellow Rotary members, learning more about the Fillmore community, and supporting opportunities that advance the well-being and success of local residents and students. His involvement reflects Ventura College's continued commitment to meaningful community partnerships and engagement throughout Ventura County.



Automotive Career Education Bachelor's Degree program New Student Orientation

On August 14, 2026, Ventura College held a New Student Orientation to welcome incoming students to the Automotive Career Education Bachelor's Degree program. The incoming cohort is comprised of 24 students.



Students had the opportunity to connect with faculty members, academic counselors, current students and staff from student services offices. Orientation plays a key role in helping students build meaningful connections and a strong sense of community as they begin their baccalaureate journey. The program provides students with advanced competencies in emerging vehicle technologies, which position graduates for leadership roles in the automotive industry that is undergoing rapid technological transformation, preparing this next generation of students to lead the field forward.

Build a Legacy Regional Mixer

On August 20, 2026, President Lewis attended the Build a Legacy Regional Mixer hosted by Build California, a workforce development initiative of the Associated General Contractors of California (AGC of California) and the AGC Construction Education Foundation. The event provided an opportunity to explore collaboration and strengthen career pathways for Ventura College students pursuing opportunities in California's construction industry.



STUDENT SUCCESS DAYS

More than 400 students participated in Student Success Days, held August 24, 2026, at Ventura College East Campus and August 25, 2026, at the Ventura campus. Students connected directly with campus departments and programs, learned about academic and student support resources, explored involvement opportunities, and had their questions answered by faculty and staff. The Campus Resource Fair brought services together in an accessible and welcoming environment, while refreshments added a celebratory touch. Student Success Days reinforced Ventura College's commitment to ensuring students feel connected, supported, and equipped to succeed throughout the semester.





Ventura College Football Season Opener – Employee Appreciation Night

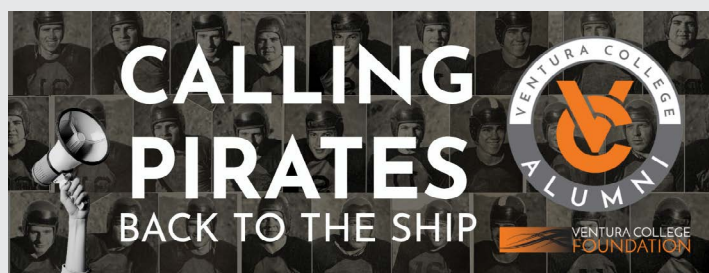
Ventura College Athletics hosted VC Employee Appreciation Night during the Pirates' football season opener against Palomar College on August 29. The evening began with a pregame tailgate at the VC Sportsplex, bringing employees and their families together before kickoff. The event provided an opportunity to recognize VC employees, strengthen our campus community, and come together in support of our student-athletes. Classified Senate Vice President Matt Moore and Criminal Justice faculty member Michael Lazarus served as honorary co-captains, while Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Roam Romagnoli participated in the pregame coin toss, helping make the evening especially meaningful for our campus community. VC Athletics created a welcoming opportunity for colleagues and families to connect while celebrating the employees who support our students and the college every day



STUDENT WELLNESS CENTER Building Wellness and Connection

August has been an exciting month at the Student Health Center! Following the successful completion of our Peer Wellness Advocate Summer Academy, five trained Peer Wellness Advocates are now available Monday–Thursday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., to provide connection, guidance, and support to students. The Wellness Lounge is also open during these hours and is already averaging approximately 60 student visits each day. Our Peers and Therapists have been actively engaging students through classroom and campus outreach, lawn games, and drop-in support in the Wellness Lounge. August highlights included welcoming the Mini Horses to campus on August 19, resuming our Rally Point group for student Veterans, and hosting a fun Bing Bong-themed event complete with keepsake photos. We are also putting the finishing touches on the Wellness Lounge redesign, including a new outdoor lounge area for students. This welcoming, student-centered space has been made possible through the generous support of Ventura County Behavioral Health, Ventura County Community College District and Ventura College leadership, and the tremendous partnership and collaboration of our VC Maintenance & Operations team.





VENTURA COLLEGE FOUNDATION All Alumni Social

The Ventura College Foundation will host its first All Alumni Social on September 23, 2026, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. at Topa Topa in Ventura. The event will provide an opportunity for Ventura College alumni to reconnect, share their journeys, and celebrate the Pirate community that helped shape their paths. Alumni may [RSVP here](#).

VC Outreach Team Roadshow

Ventura College's Outreach team connected with 25 high school partners throughout Ventura County to provide important updates on the CCCStart application, student ID verification, financial aid, enrollment, and upcoming workshops.

As a welcome-back and goodwill gesture, the team delivered Crumbl Cookies to each school, strengthening our relationships with high school counselors and staff and reinforcing our commitment to supporting local students as they transition to college.



Ventura College Welcomes French Youth Tennis Delegation

Ventura College welcomed 25 high school tennis athletes and coaches from France for a third visit from United Sports 31, a French sports agency that includes VC as a key stop on its U.S. university tour. The delegation trained alongside VC tennis players and toured the campus with Head Coach Nelson. International Student Office Director Cláudia Wilroy and International Student Specialist Naluca Mwala met with the delegation to share insights about the college's programs and the American higher education system.



Student Life Day

On September 1, the Ventura College Associated Students hosted Student Life Day, providing students with an opportunity to get involved, meet new people, and connect with the campus community. Students explored campus clubs and organizations, learned about leadership opportunities, played games, and discovered new ways to engage on campus. A specialty drink cart was also a popular addition, giving students a fun way to cool off and connect while enjoying the event.



Latinx Heritage Month

Ventura College will celebrate Latinx Heritage Month with a series of events highlighting cultural identity, community, advocacy, and representation. On September 22, Professor Rubisela Gamboa and Professor Elias Serna will lead a presentation in collaboration with VC Ethnic Studies to explore cultural identity, lowrider culture, and its impact on advocacy and representation, with activities and a sweet treat for attendees. On September 29, the College will host a family-centered Latinx Heritage Month Celebration featuring a lowrider car show, local food vendors, live music, and cultural activities designed to bring the campus and surrounding community together. The College is coordinating with VC Ethnic Studies and the VC Automotive Club to finalize event details and strengthen community participation. Student leaders are working with the LEAP Division, VC Ethnic Studies, and our STEM student clubs to plan an additional Latinx Heritage Month event in October.



Dreamer's Resource Center Update

The Dreamers Resource Center continues to expand services, partnerships, and opportunities for undocumented students at Ventura College. Student engagement has increased significantly, with 909 visits in Spring 2026, a 391.4% increase from Fall 2024 (185 visits). In the first four weeks of Fall 2026, the Center has already recorded 297 visits, with students accessing academic support, community building, CA Dream Act assistance, legal services, and campus resources.

Through a new partnership with the VC Foundation Weekend Marketplace and Mariposa Advocacy, free immigration legal services will be offered on the first Saturday of each month beginning this fall. Services include legal consultations, green card renewals, citizenship applications, DACA renewals, Know Your Rights information, and family preparedness forms.

The Dream Act Service Incentive Grant (DSIG) program currently has 15 student volunteers beginning or preparing for campus placements, providing professional experience and transferable skills. The Center also helped reactivate the I.D.E.A.S. Club, creating additional leadership, community-building, and engagement opportunities. Upcoming programs include the Dreamer Family Open House (Sept. 24), Undocu Ally Training (Oct. 6), Undocumented Student Success Summit (Oct. 16), and Undocu Student Success Week (Oct. 19–23), featuring programs focused on student success, family preparedness, and community resources.

