

# OPPORTUNITY

# NEWS



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# NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

## Joseph claims Minnie Piper nomination

Dr. Celucien Joseph, San Jacinto College Central Campus English department chair, is the College's 2024-2025 Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Award nominee. Joseph has been teaching at San Jac for two years, with 20 years' experience at the collegiate level.

Joseph has worked on various committees and student organizations, including the San Jac Online academic support services work group, Mosaic mentoring program, and "Accents" student literary magazine.

Also recently announced were the faculty and staff Excellence Award recipients.

Faculty recipients include:

- Dr. Albert Talley, senior director, child development and education
- Dr. Nicole Bradley, program director, biotechnology

- Amber Tyler, program director, welding technology
- Estrellita Coronado, clinical coordinator, pharmacy technician

Staff recipients include:

- Hollis Auzenne, senior administrative assistant, dean of instructional services office
- Maria Dabrowski, advisor, campus financial aid service
- Natalia Mendez, advisor, campus financial aid service
- Jeanie Wright, coordinator, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

The administrator Excellence Award went to Shelley Rinehart, assistant vice chancellor, instructional and support program efficacy, and Rezaur Rahman, director of sustainability/energy management, facilities energy management.

Criteria for the College's faculty and staff Excellence Award nominations include addressing the nominee's last two years of work and service in these areas: ability to serve

as a role model and work collaboratively with others; possession of exemplary attributes or qualifications; contribution to addressing or meeting the needs of students and/or employees; and dedication, service, and involvement in the College community.

## San Jac students selected for all-state ensembles

Thirty-one San Jacinto College music students have been selected for the Texas Two-Year College All-State choir, jazz band, and symphonic band — the highest honor a Texas community college music student can attain.

Each year, the Texas Music Educators Association hosts auditions for the all-state ensembles. During the rigorous



selection process, students must demonstrate advanced technical skills, musical interpretation, and proficiency.

"Earning a spot in an all-state ensemble is no small feat. It takes discipline, passion, and months of preparation," said Lynne Brandt, Central Campus music department chair.

San Jac's music program has long been recognized for its excellence, building a strong tradition of student success. Preparing students for professional music careers

and seamless transfer to four-year universities, the College continues to be a leading institution for aspiring musicians.

This latest achievement attests to the College's high-quality music education and performance opportunities.

## Register your child for San Jac summer camps

This summer, keep your kids busy with camps at San Jacinto College!

Varying from athletics and arts to music and STEM, San Jac summer camps have something to interest every kid from 5 to 18.

From taking the stage in musical theatre camp to exploring hands-on activities in science and trades, campers learn while having fun.

To learn more about summer 2025 camps and to register, scan the QR code.



Photos by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

# INSPIRED BY PATIENTS' PARENTS, THIS PEDIATRIC ICU NURSE IS TAKING HIS CAREER FURTHER

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

There's sacrificing to lose 40 pounds. To train for a marathon. To save for a new car.

And then there's sacrificing 100% for years to care for your chronically ill child. Witnessing that kind of sacrifice is so powerful Kelvin Gray gets misty-eyed just talking about it.

"Parenting is hard, and that's even if everything is perfect with your kid," said Gray, a Texas Children's Hospital pediatric intensive care unit nurse. "Chronic illness is next level."

The "absolutely dedicated" parents he sees — combined with his own desire to do his best for his patients — recently inspired the San Jacinto College alumnus to make a big sacrifice himself.

## Brick wall

Always drawn to health care, Gray enrolled in San Jac's associate degree nursing program in 2012.

Like most other nursing school newbies, he felt confident until he hit the "brick wall" — the knowledge gap that even science classes didn't prepare him for.

"Your nursing instructors force you to work, force you to think," he said. "They give you nothing for free, but they guide you. Once you start overcoming the challenges brick by brick, that's when your confidence builds."

Gray knew nursing would be a solid career, so when nursing classes proved to be "hard as hell," he showed himself to be

just as tough.

"The students who come from San Jac are more prepared from my experience," he said.

## Diverse nursing career

After graduating from San Jac in 2014, Gray enjoyed an "extremely diverse" career. For five years, he worked in everything from intermediate care to the emergency room.

During the pandemic, he transitioned to travel nursing nationwide. The deaths he experienced in those two years eclipsed everything he'd experienced in the previous five.

"After nursing school, that was the greatest challenge I faced in my entire career emotionally and mentally," Gray said. "I shed the most tears with families during that time."

Eventually he returned to Houston, where he landed his current role at Texas Children's Hospital.

## Nursing school round two

After working in so many specialties, Gray felt comfortable in his career, but pediatric care upped the ante.

"It's much more serious, critical, and emotional working with pediatrics. Everyone around you is in school, trying," he said. "There's a lot to learn, and you want to do better for your patients."

Gray had never envisioned round two of nursing school. But to advance his career and better serve his patients, he enrolled in San Jac's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in August 2023. His schedule reverted to "books and work,"

with social outings taking a raincheck for 12 months.

"Nursing school definitely makes you choose," he said.

But Gray knew the long-term rewards were worth short-term sacrifices. On the plus side, he could do the 100% online classes at his own pace and fit them around his work schedule.

"They find a way to integrate your work experience," he said. "It never felt like you were on the brink of not being successful. They make it extremely possible for you to make it."

This past December, he

completed his BSN degree exactly 10 years after his associate degree.

## Wisdom in persevering

When Gray thinks of dedication, he pictures one patient's father. The police officer, a single dad, showed up consistently at the hospital to lift his 20-year-old, 140-pound son from the bed to a bedside chair to do exercises together.

"Just witnessing the sacrifice, him putting his life to the side, it gives me a lot of patience to deal with anything that may challenge me as a nurse," he said.

Gray carries this image

of dedication in his mind as he pursues his next goal: a doctorate in psychiatric mental health nursing. As a future nurse practitioner, he wants to help patients navigate mental health disorders that impact physiological disorders.

Until then, he continues to encourage new and future nurses to make wise decisions now to reap the rewards later: "You can accomplish a lot if you approach it the right way."

Scan the QR code to learn more about the BSN program.

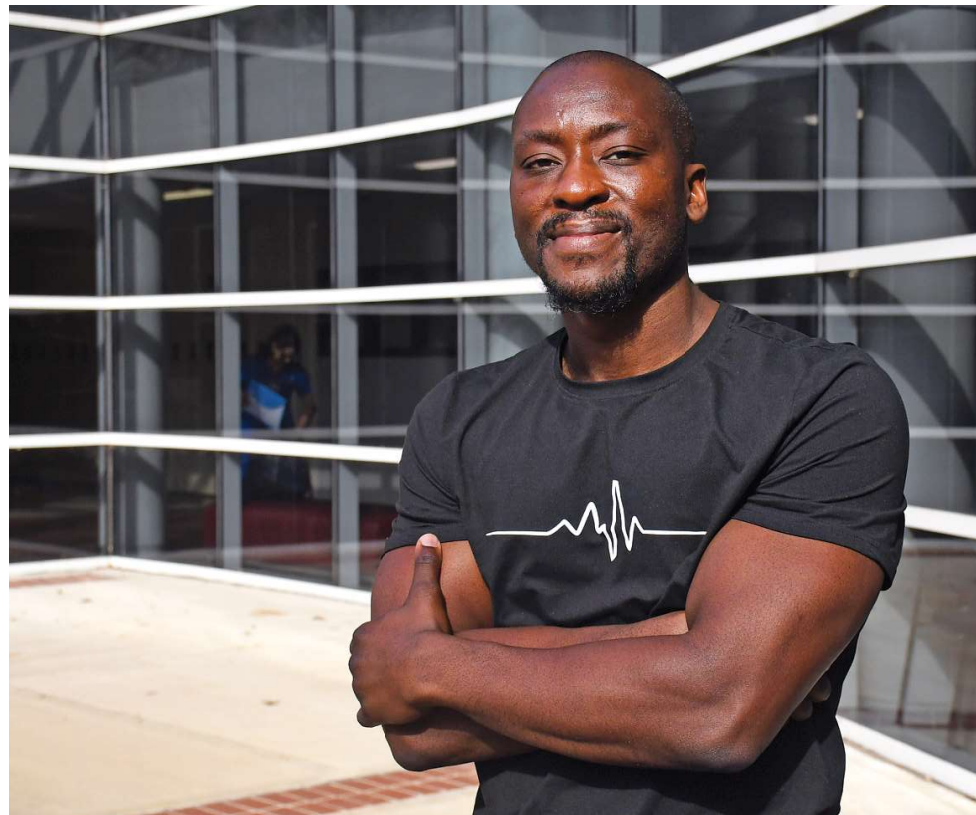


Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

# SAN JAC OFFERS SECOND CHANCE TO HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

San Jacinto College is one of five institutions statewide approved to pilot the new Texas Opportunity High School Diploma program. This innovative initiative allows adult learners a pathway to earn a high school diploma while also earning a career and technical education certificate or degree.

In conjunction with Alamo College District, Dallas College, Del Mar College, and El Paso Community College, San Jac is developing assessments and competency training, in anticipation of rolling Opportunity High School Diploma as early as summer 2025.

Established by the Texas

Legislature’s House Bill 8, the program aligns with the state’s higher education strategic plan, Building a Talent Strong Texas.

“San Jacinto College is dedicated to expanding educational opportunities for all learners, and the Texas Opportunity High School Diploma program is a game changer for adults seeking to advance their education and careers,” said Dr. Allatia Harris, vice chancellor of strategic initiatives. “We are proud to be part of this initiative and look forward to helping students gain the credentials and skills they need for success.”

Opportunity High School Diploma revolves around five

core competency areas essential for career readiness:

- Civics
- Communication skills
- Quantitative reasoning
- Scientific reasoning
- Workplace success skills

Enrolled adult students will complete assessments in these areas to demonstrate their proficiency and earn their diploma — a credential equivalent to a high school diploma awarded by a Texas public school district.

Students who do not pass a competency assessment may continue learning at their own pace before trying the assessment again. Also, students with prior high school

or workforce experience may bypass certain competencies by demonstrating existing knowledge and skills.

According to an everytexan.org report, many adults lack a high school diploma, limiting their career advancement and economic mobility. By offering a second chance to complete their education, Opportunity High School Diploma bridges these gaps and provides a path toward stable, well-paying jobs.

As Texas faces increasing demand for a skilled workforce, this program will strengthen the state’s talent pipeline and ensure employers have qualified professionals.

Scan the QR code to learn

more about the Texas Opportunity High School Diploma program at San Jac.



Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College

## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Through May 1	Student Art and Design Exhibition		South Campus Gallery, Flickinger Fine Arts Center (S15.143)
Through August 18	Fall Registration Open		All campuses and online
April 9	Brass Studio Recital	3:30 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 11	Voice Area Recital	3 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 16	Colloquium Recital	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 17	San Jac Storytime with Grown-up Storytime Houston	TBA	South Campus Black Box Theatre (S15.135)
April 18	Spring Holiday	Closed	All campuses and online
April 21	North Art and Design Student Show	TBA	North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1.147)
April 22	Guitar Ensemble Concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 24	Composers’ Recital	12-1 p.m.	North Campus, TBA
April 24	Orpheus Concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 25	Piano Area Recital	3 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 28	Jazz Ensemble Concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 29	Joint Central and North Campus Choir Concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151)
April 30	Steel Band Spring Concert	7 p.m.	Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C13)
May 2-3	Kaleidoscope Spring Dance Concert	TBA	South Campus, Marie Flickinger Fine Arts Center

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu/calendar](http://sanjac.edu/calendar).

# NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT CELEBRATES DIVERSE MINDS

By Courtney Morris  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Dana Jenkins-Post started her role at San Jacinto College with one resolve: “I can do more.”

Throughout her career, she has helped everyone from K-12 special education students to adults seeking disability support. She watched them transition to college, search for jobs, or navigate community services.

Often, support dropped off after high school.

“My former high school students kept coming back to me asking for help,” Jenkins-Post said. “They weren’t getting the help they needed in college.”

When San Jac posted the neurodiversity support services coordinator position, she saw her chance to bridge the gap in services.

## Qualifying for neurodiversity

Since late 2023, Jenkins-Post has blended her professional experience to support San Jac’s neurodivergent students — those with brain differences like autism, dyslexia, ADHD, brain injury, and more.

“Rather than seeing these differences as deficits or disorders, neurodiversity highlights the unique strengths and perspectives that individuals with diverse neurological makeup offer,” she said.

To qualify for neurodiversity support, students must self-identify as neurodivergent and fill out an intake form. One-on-one coaching helps them develop academic and personal skills, and a coming neurodiversity club will help build community.

## Tailoring support

According to Jenkins-Post’s leader, Samra Ward, San Jac neurodivergent students do the same curriculum as their peers — unlike many other community colleges’ programs.

“We’re here to support them in the dreams they already have or help them find those dreams and not be defined by a label others give them,” Ward, student access resources director, said.

The support needed is as unique as the students themselves. Jenkins-Post helped one student identify multi-step processes, like requesting a professor’s assistance. Instead of asking for help during a lecture, the student learned how to research the instructor’s contact information, schedule a meeting, and prepare discussion topics.

Another student worked with her to break down big assignments into manageable chunks.

Regular check-ins increase accountability.

## Celebrating differences

San Jac also offers neurodiversity training to interested faculty and staff,

who embrace differences as “not just OK but good.”

“Our faculty see these students as humans navigating highs and lows,” Ward said. “They see them as people, not just a label — someone they’re excited to teach and support.”

The neurodiversity program adapts its approach to every student, making sure they feel heard while building their independence. After all, that’s the College’s goal — helping each student thrive.

“This goes beyond a neurodiversity or neurotypical discussion,” Jenkins-Post said. “It’s about meeting people’s needs, meeting them where they are. If you meet their needs, you can help them succeed.”

Scan the QR code to learn more about accessibility support.



**Neurodivergent:** Describes people whose brains differ significantly from the “typical” population. Whether innate or acquired, these differences include medical conditions, mental health responses, learning disabilities, and other neurodevelopmental disabilities (e.g., autism, brain injury, trauma, dyslexia, ADHD, etc.).

**Neurodiverse:** Refers to a group of people — rather than a single person — whose brains are different from each other.

**Neurodiversity:** Akin to biodiversity; a biological fact that human minds are diverse.



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

# REGISTER NOW

SUMMER CLASSES  
START  
**JUNE 2**

FALL CLASSES  
START  
**AUG. 18**

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# AUDIO ENGINEERING WELCOMES VETTED: BAND OF VETERANS INSPIRES THROUGH MUSIC AND MENTORSHIP

By **Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The San Jacinto College Central Campus recently hosted Vetted, a band comprising wounded warriors and military veterans, to record new music with the College's audio engineering technology program.

Andrew Fiddler, audio engineering professor, connected with the band through a mutual friend.

"Bringing a band like Vetted to campus provides something tangible that our students can latch onto to better prepare them for real-world scenarios," said Fiddler. "I was fortunate to experience a recording session like this early on in my musical journey, and it inspired me to pursue a career in the recording industry. Providing that experience here at San Jac is something that makes our program special."

The band's visit reflects its commitment to creating music with meaning, all while mentoring and inspiring the next generation of music professionals. Vetted recorded with Fiddler and his students in San Jac's state-of-the-art facilities.

"I had a great time working with Vetted. They were very welcoming and professional. It gave me a good glimpse at how it can be to work with bands in the field," said Angie Flores, audio engineering student. "During the sessions I found it interesting how they were able to communicate with each other to get their artistic ideas out. They had good chemistry with one another, and that made the process run smoother."

The band's lineup includes founding member and drummer Paul DeLacerda, lead guitarist and vocalist Slade Deliberto, guitarist P.J. Pennington, bass guitarist John Patrick Quinlan Clevenger, and rapper and backing vocalist Kristen Michael Park. The diversity in their backgrounds enriches their music, blending genres and experiences into a cohesive sound.

Vetted is more than a band. It is a voice for the veteran community, raising awareness about suicide prevention and mental health challenges faced by veterans. Operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the band funds its tours and projects through donations. This charitable model ensures that its mission remains the focus,

performing for free for those who need its message the most.

The band's mission also includes suicide prevention training and substance abuse programs through military and civilian partnerships. Vetted members support and empower their fellow warriors, highlighting the importance of understanding during the challenging transition to civilian life.

"All of us have lost a lot of friends through suicide, not just military. Life can be hard for everybody at any point, so we try to connect through music and share that message," Deliberto said. "We're not just singing about it. We've lived it."

Vetted primarily performs at military installations, often as part of USO events, for active-duty service members. At its historic performance at Fleet Week Miami, it became the first band to play aboard the USS Bataan's flight deck. Vetted also collaborates with organizations like Alabama Power and Georgia Power to support veteran hiring initiatives.

One of the band's newest ventures involves co-writing music with members of the rock band Three Days Grace. This

collaboration began serendipitously when Vetted members attended a meet-and-greet and formed a bond with the band. Their shared passion for music and advocacy for mental health blossomed into a partnership, leading to co-written songs and joint performances.

"All these opportunities, like working with Three Days Grace or playing Fleet Week Miami, just seem to come from the universe," Deliberto said. "We don't push too hard. We just try to show up and do everything we can."

With new singles in the works, Vetted members continue to grow as artists and advocates. As they perform and collaborate nationwide, they inspire veterans and civilians alike, proving that even in adversity music can connect and change lives.

"Music is our tool to send a message of resilience and hope to anyone struggling. It's bigger than us — it's about making a difference," Deliberto said.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the audio engineering program.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College



# THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



## LinkedIn

On Nov. 4, a SpaceX rocket launched from Kennedy Space Center carrying a science experiment designed by San Jac's students Marcus Pitre, Maheen Bukhari, and Amna Qureshi. Their project, selected through the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program, studied how a specific mustard plant species grows in microgravity versus Earth.

Guided by chemistry professor Dr. Carrie Owens, the team dedicated months to refining their experiment to meet NASA's strict requirements, including designing a mini lab and securing specialized supplies. After its six-week journey in space, they began analyzing and comparing the results from microgravity and Earth-based conditions.

The project was a transformative experience for the students, each pursuing careers in science, engineering, or medicine. Reflecting on the journey, Qureshi said, "It's definitely been a unique experience — learning to work together as a team and use the college lab equipment."

To read more about their experience, visit <https://lnkd.in/g92Jcwhc>.



51 Reactions | 3 Comments | 4,754 Impressions | 115 Engagements



## Facebook

### ❄️ Snow Day Alert, Ravens! ❄️

The snow is falling, and we want to see how YOU'RE making the most of it! Whether you're building snowmen, having snowball fights, or just enjoying the view, share your best snow pics with us! 📷

Send your photos to us in messenger or tag us using #SJCSnowDay — we'll be putting together a fun compilation later this week. Let's show the world how Ravens embrace the ❄️!

Can't wait to see all your winter wonderland moments!  
#SanJacintoCollege #RavenPride #Snowday2025



53 Reactions | 20 Comments | 715 Post Clicks | 4,440 Impressions



## Instagram

### Behind the scenes from the baseball media day. 📷

The Ravens are ready to take the field, and the season kicks off this Friday! Find out more details at <http://sanjacsports.com>.

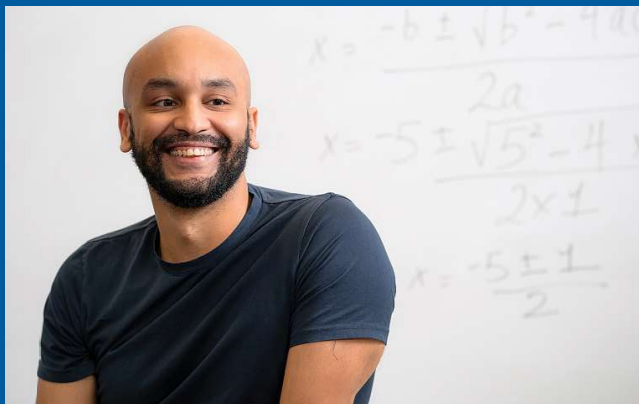


432 Likes | 16,195 Impressions | 547 Engagements

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## SAN JACINTO COLLEGE <sup>SM</sup>

### NORTH CAMPUS

5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston, TX 77049

### CENTRAL CAMPUS

8060 Spencer Hwy., Pasadena, TX 77505

### SOUTH CAMPUS

13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, TX 77089

### MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

### GENERATION PARK CAMPUS

13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044

### ONLINE

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## VISION & MISSION



**Vision** — San Jacinto College will advance the social and economic mobility of all members of our community. We will be known for our excellence in teaching and learning, our intentional student-centered support, and our commitment to every student. We will be the preferred workforce and economic development partner in the region and a champion for lifelong learning. San Jacinto College will inspire students to explore opportunities, define their educational and career paths, and achieve their goals and dreams.

**Mission** — San Jacinto College is focused on student success, academic progress, university transfer, and employment. We are committed to opportunities that enrich the quality of life in the communities we serve.

## SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS



A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow's community leaders. For more than 25 years, the Foundation has helped thousands of students reach their goals. Our former students and graduates have filled vital roles in hospitals, classrooms, executive offices, manufacturing plants, and laboratories across our region and beyond. They have also won the World Series and NBA championships, starred in major motion pictures, and created major theatrical productions. Help our students today with the gift of education. Contact the San Jacinto College Foundation at 281-998-6104 or visit [sanjac.edu/foundation](https://sanjac.edu/foundation).

## COMMUNITY IMPACT



Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA+ by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's. For more information about San Jacinto College visit [sanjac.edu](https://sanjac.edu).

