

SENIOR FOCUS

FALL 2025



**FROM CAMO
TO CAMPUS,
YOUR NEXT
CHAPTER
AWAITS**

**SAN JAC ALUMNA PUTS
THE CARE IN CAREER**



**LIFELONG LEARNER
RETURNS TO
CLASSROOM
AFTER 40 YEARS**

SAN JAC HAS SO MUCH FOR SENIORS!

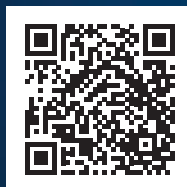


**INVEST IN
YOURSELF**
with **LIFELONG
LEARNING**

San Jacinto College offers a variety of leisure learning courses to help you expand your horizons and have fun! You can enjoy our short courses year-round, along with flexible schedules and easy registration.

 **SAN JACINTOSM
COLLEGE**

Scan the QR code to view the latest course offerings:



sanjac.edu

An Equal Opportunity Institution
sanjac.edu/accreditation



CONTENTS



Questions about San Jacinto College programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Contact Center at 281-998-6150. Comments or questions about the publication can be directed to the San Jacinto College External Relations Department at 281-998-6152.

Executive Editor: Amanda Fenwick, *Vice President, External Relations*

Editor: Jacquelyn Conger, *Director of Public Relations and Marketing Communications*

Contributing Writers and Photographers: Neesha Hosein, Courtney Morris, and Melissa Trevizo

Visit San Jacinto College online at sanjac.edu.
Call us at 281-998-6150.



Follow us on Facebook @SanJacintoCollege and Instagram @SanJacCollege.

About San Jacinto College

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 ranked second in the nation among more than 1,100 community colleges, as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, plus an online college, San Jacinto College serves 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.

SeniorFocus is published three times a year by San Jacinto Community College District, 4624 Fairmont Parkway, Suite 210, Pasadena, Texas, 77504, in partnership with Academic Marketing Services.

All rights reserved. No part of the material printed may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the permission of the publisher.

©2025 San Jacinto Community College District

- 2** News & notes from around the College
- 3** San Jac alumna puts the care in career
- 4** Remembering John Moon Jr.: A champion for students and San Jac's future
- 5** From camo to campus, your next chapter awaits
- 6** San Jac unveils BOLD 2030 strategic plan
- 7** Harrison and Wilson elected to Board of Trustees
- 8** Lifelong learner returns to classroom after 40 years

NEWS & NOTES

FROM AROUND THE COLLEGE

Aspen Institute recognizes San Jac as Finalist with Distinction

The Aspen Institute named San Jacinto College a Finalist with Distinction for the 2025 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, ranking the institution as one of the top community colleges in the nation, out of more than 1,100 community colleges.

Aspen recognized San Jac's commitment to helping students succeed through strong onboarding, advising, and clear transfer pathways. A key workforce training partner, the College also tailors programs to industry needs across the Gulf Coast region.

The 2025 Aspen Prize results are as follows:

- **Aspen Prize Winner:** Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
- **Finalists with Distinction:** San Jacinto College and South Puget Sound Community College
- **Rising Star:** Wallace State Community College-Hanceville
- **Finalists:** Georgia Highlands College, Moorpark College, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Northwest Vista College, Seminole State College of Florida, and Union College



Cancer data management program expands nationwide

San Jacinto College has expanded its nationally recognized cancer data management program to students across the U.S., helping meet the rising demand for oncology data specialists as cancer cases increase nationwide.

Oncology data specialists play a vital role in improving cancer research, treatment, and prevention by tracking patient histories, diagnoses, and outcomes.

The College's program — the first in the U.S. accredited by the National Cancer Registrars Association and the only one of its kind in Texas — has earned praise for producing job-ready graduates. Many students go on to work in hospitals, public health, or remotely, earning competitive salaries without the time or cost of a four-year degree.

With this 100% online program, San Jac continues to lead in workforce training that saves lives, making the community proud and helping families near and far.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the **cancer data management program**.



You're Invited: Couture for a Cause Gala in April

Mark your calendar for an elegant evening of fashion and philanthropy! Join the San Jacinto College Foundation for the Couture for a Cause Gala Friday, April 24, 2026 — a black-tie affair benefiting the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship.

This stylish event will raise funds to provide a debt-free degree or certificate to in-district high school graduates. By supporting the gala, you'll help students focus on their future, not their finances.

The gala runs from 6-9 p.m. at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology on San Jac's Central Campus and includes a cocktail hour, gourmet dinner, and inspiring evening of community connection.

To reserve your table, call **281-998-6104** or email foundation@sjcd.edu.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the **gala**.



SAN JAC ALUMNA

PUTS THE CARE IN CAREER

■ By Neesha Hosein

Patricia Carter has been a San Jacinto College employee for six years as senior administrative assistant for the associate degree nursing program on the Central Campus, but her connection to the College goes back decades.

“When I got this job, I thought, ‘Oh, my gosh, I get to work in the nursing field without having to see needles. That’s a win,’” Carter said.

She considers this opportunity an homage to her late mom, who was a nurse and devoted to helping others.

“She was always that person trying to be helpful, and I think that is embedded in me,” Carter said.

Planting San Jac roots

Carter enrolled at San Jac shortly after graduating from high school in 1980. As a high school cheerleader, she was a natural for the San Jac cheer squad supporting the College’s basketball team.

In this role, Carter’s instinct to help others shined through. She and a friend often helped the out-of-state basketball players who didn’t have transportation or family and friends nearby.

“Sometimes we’d pick them up and bring them to my parents’ house to eat or take them to the mall if they needed anything — just to help out,” she said. “We did lots of things to support the players and the school, like fundraisers, fairs, and I was even part of a dunking booth once. Being a cheerleader was fun.”

Although the enthusiasm was there, life happened, and Carter had to take a long pause from her education to focus on family.

The next chapter

When her youngest child was old enough, Carter decided to join the workforce.

“Computers were becoming a big thing then, and I didn’t really have any training, so I decided to go back to San Jac,” she said.

Carter completed an administrative assistant certificate program at the Central Campus in 2001, which helped her land an administrative role in the oil and gas industry. After 15 years on the job, a layoff altered her course.

After a few months, she was ready to work again and decided to apply for a job at her alma mater. North Campus called first but had to reschedule her interview. In the interim, Central Campus swooped in with an offer she couldn’t refuse. Carter calls it a twist of fate.



Photo courtesy of Patricia Carter

When work feels like home

What Carter loves most about San Jac is the family-like environment.

“It’s like no other place I’ve ever worked,” she said. “I love the atmosphere and the camaraderie. We are like a family, and we take care of each other.”

Carter treats students and colleagues with the same warmth. She guides students through the maze of paperwork, orientations, exams, and immunization requirements that come with nursing school. She offers encouragement — and sometimes a piece of chocolate or even a hug when needed.

Carter also volunteers with San Jac Cares.

“It’s a phone call to check on students and offer guidance on things like financial aid, account holds, or whatever they need help with,” she said. “If I don’t know the answer, I promise to connect them to the right person. I do it because everybody matters to me.”

Just a few years from retirement, Carter is content with the impact she’s made and plans to keep paying it forward through kindness and serving others.



REMEMBERING JOHN MOON JR.:

A CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS AND SAN JAC'S FUTURE

■ By Melissa Trevizo



San Jacinto College mourns the passing of John Moon Jr., a dedicated member of the Board of Trustees whose leadership helped shape the College's growth and direction for more than 15 years.

Moon passed away in July, leaving a legacy defined by service, vision, and a deep commitment to student success.

Elected to the Board of Trustees in 2009, Moon served in several leadership roles, including vice chair and chair of the building committee. His guidance was instrumental in developing and passing two major bond initiatives totaling \$720 million, which allowed the College to expand and modernize its facilities to better serve students and the community.

Moon also extended his service beyond the boardroom. He was an active member of the San Jacinto College Foundation Board of

Directors and taught as an adjunct professor, demonstrating his passion for education and student development on multiple fronts.

A lifelong Pasadena resident and Sam Rayburn High School graduate, Moon began his own higher education journey at San Jac. He later earned degrees from Southern Methodist University and the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Professionally, he was a certified public accountant with more than 30 years of experience in banking and real estate.

Deeply rooted in his community, Moon brought not only financial expertise to the Board but also a personal understanding of the value San Jac brings to students and families across the region.

Moon's impact will be felt for generations. His legacy of leadership, community involvement, and unwavering support for San Jac will continue to inspire all who follow in his footsteps.

FROM CAMO TO CAMPUS, YOUR NEXT CHAPTER AWAITS

■ By Courtney Morris

If you've served in the military, San Jacinto College is here to serve you! The College supports more than 1,300 veteran students, with 17% older than 35.

Holly Morrison, veteran services manager and a veteran herself, returned to San Jac at 40 and graduated with her master's degree at 54.

"I understand what it feels like to be the oldest person in the classroom," she said. "Being older helped me stay focused on improving my skills and my family's well-being. Serving in the military taught me I can do anything I set my mind to!"

Whatever your age, you've got personalized veteran support at San Jac. Morrison shares tips to help you ease back into the classroom.

Q Can I still use my GI Bill® or other VA education benefits at my age?

A If you served before Sept. 11, 2001, you may have hit a delimiting date, but the best way to see if you qualify for education benefits is to apply.

Visit va.gov/education/how-to-apply to learn more about applying for education benefits. If you're a disabled veteran, you may qualify for Veteran Readiness and Employment (Chapter 31) benefits.

Q Do you offer credit for my military experience or prior training?

A Yes, San Jac's records management will review college and military transcripts for classes that apply toward your degree.

Q How can I get help with math, writing, or study skills?

A San Jac offers in-person and online tutoring, study resources, success workshops, textbooks, and test preparation. Each veteran center also has computers, printers, and a quiet study area just for veterans!

Q Will I feel out of place as an older student? Is there a veteran or adult learner community on campus?

A Our College supports all ages. At our spring 2025 graduation ceremony, graduates ranged from 16 to 70.

Visit your campus veteran center to meet other veteran students and dependents. Our veterans often build relationships that go beyond the classroom to the next level of education.

Q Are there flexible classes to fit my schedule?

A San Jac offers weekend, evening, face-to-face, hybrid, and online classes. If you want adventure, you might consider non-credit truck driving and maritime courses, which are approved for Hazlewood and federal benefits.

Q What short-term programs do you offer for someone looking to reskill or start a new career?

A San Jac offers over 200 degrees that fit a variety of interests. Certificates like biomanufacturing offer skills for employment after completion of the first semester.

You may use our career services staff to determine the best career for you.

Q Can I take classes just for fun even if I'm not pursuing a degree?

A Yes, but if you're using veteran benefits, Hazlewood exemption, or financial aid, the program must be approved by the VA, and certified courses should apply toward the approved degree program. Courses that lead to a workforce credential or career may qualify for the Hazlewood exemption.

San Jac also offers an over-65 exemption, so you may receive a tuition waiver for up to six semester credit hours if space is available.

Q Who can help me with enrollment, benefits, and support?

A San Jac has three veteran centers staffed with school certifying officials and educational planners. Call or visit us:



- **Central Campus:** 281-998-6350 ext. 1032 | Welcome Center (C27.1400)
- **South Campus:** 281-998-6350 ext. 4672 | Academic Hall (S8.2066)
- **North Campus:** 281-998-6350 ext. 7384 | Spencer Building (N8.117)

Or you can schedule an in-person or virtual advising appointment by choosing "Veterans" at whos-next.com/sanjac/appointments.

We're here to help you take that next step to invest in yourself.

Scan the QR code to learn more about **veteran support**.



VETERAN AND MILITARY AFFILIATE RESOURCE FAIR

Learn about education benefits, community organizations, and other resources for veterans and their families!

Date/Time: Friday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Location: LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (Central Campus, Building C45), 7901 Fairmont Pkwy., Pasadena, TX 77507

Cost: Free

Contact: veterans@sjcd.edu

SAN JAC UNVEILS BOLD 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

■ By Jacquelynn Conger

San Jacinto College is setting a bold new course for the future with its 2025-2030 strategic plan, BOLD 2030. Building on the successes of previous strategic plans, the new roadmap reaffirms the College's mission to change lives through education, community engagement, and partnerships —while embracing new strategies to meet the evolving needs of students and the region.

BOLD 2030 is structured around four ambitious focus areas: Break Barriers, Optimize Systems, Leverage Partnerships, and Demonstrate Excellence. Each area is designed to remove obstacles for students, strengthen internal operations, and grow community and industry partnerships.

Strategic planning is a vital tool for any college, especially a public institution like San Jac that depends on community support. A strong strategic plan helps the College stay focused on its goals, use tax dollars and resources wisely, and measure progress over time. It allows San Jac to remain accountable to the public and adapt to changes in the workforce, technology, and student needs.

Most importantly, a strategic plan ensures the College can continue offering high-quality, affordable education that supports the economy and improves lives right here in our own neighborhoods. When the community knows where the College is headed and how it plans to get there, it builds trust and transparency — key ingredients for continued support.

“We're proud of the progress we've made over 60 years, and BOLD 2030 will take us even further,” said San Jac Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer. “This plan is about being courageous in how we support students, how we collaborate with

our partners, and how we prepare the workforce of tomorrow.”

The **Break Barriers** priority focuses on eliminating obstacles to education by expanding access, increasing financial aid, and connecting students with essential support services. This expands on the College's recent success in improving student completion rates and streamlining enrollment processes.

Through **Optimize Systems**, San Jac will improve how students move through programs, ensuring their education aligns with transfer goals, personal interests, and employment needs. This includes high-quality instruction, personalized advising, and better use of data to support student success.

With **Leverage Partnerships**, the College will expand partnerships with industry, universities, and community organizations. These collaborations help create innovative training programs and open doors to jobs and internships that benefit students and the region.

Finally, **Demonstrate Excellence** reflects the College's deep commitment to fostering a welcoming, high-performing environment for both students and employees. This includes recruiting and retaining top talent, promoting professional growth, and investing in campus infrastructure.

As the College prepares to implement BOLD 2030, its direction remains clear: to serve the community and our students with excellence, vision, and accountability.

“This plan isn't just a set of goals — it's a promise to be bold in serving our students and community,” Hellyer said.

“This plan isn't just a set of goals — it's a promise to be bold in serving our students and community.”

– Dr. Brenda Hellyer,
Chancellor





HARRISON AND WILSON ELECTED TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

■ By Amanda Fenwick

In May, San Jacinto College voters selected two community leaders to serve on the College’s Board of Trustees, reaffirming the community’s commitment to quality, accessible education.

Judy Harrison was elected to Position 3, earning 51.42% of the vote in a run-off election. Harrison brings a deep understanding of the College’s mission, having served as a faculty member for nearly 40 years. Her classroom experience offers a valuable perspective on student success and academic excellence.

In Position 4, long-serving trustee Larry Wilson was re-elected with 60.77% of the vote. Wilson has been a steady presence on the Board for 18 years, helping guide San Jac through growth, innovation, and national recognition.

Both Harrison and Wilson will serve six-year terms. Wilson was sworn in on June 2, followed by Harrison on June 17.

Trustees help guide the mission, vision, and policies of the College, ensuring fiscal responsibility, student success, and community impact. Board members play a vital role in shaping policies, approving budgets,

and overseeing the College’s long-term direction. Their work ensures San Jac remains a top-tier institution serving students of all ages and backgrounds — an important investment in the future of our community.

At this time, Position 5 remains vacant after the passing of Trustee John Moon Jr., who faithfully served the College for many years. The Board has been following an appointment process to fill the seat, which began with an application period from Aug. 20 through Sept. 26.

Board members will select the final candidates to interview in mid-October. The appointed trustee will be confirmed and sworn in during the Nov. 3 board meeting. This thoughtful process is intended to select someone who truly reflects the needs, values, and vision of San Jac’s community.

The College continues to be guided by dedicated leaders who share a passion for education and community service.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the **Board of Trustees**.



LIFELONG LEARNER

RETURNS TO CLASSROOM AFTER 40 YEARS

■ By Neesha Hosein

Since retiring eight years ago, Gene Fisseler has relished traveling and volunteering with conservation and environmental nonprofit organizations. He recently added college to his list of retirement adventures.

A native of Waco, Fisseler has resided in Houston since 1979. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering from Texas A&M University and the University of Houston and enjoyed a 40-year career in the electric power industry, working for Houston Lighting & Power, Reliant Energy, and NRG. His career encompassed engineering, environmental work, public relations, community affairs, and government relations.

Fisseler always thought of San Jacinto College as just another community college until one of San Jac's State of the College events inspired a new perspective.

"I had no idea there was something like 30,000 students, five campuses, more than 200 degrees and certifications, and the recurring Aspen Award consideration," he said. "Following that luncheon, I decided I wanted to contribute to San Jac's ongoing success.

"What better way to know the students' world than to be a student myself," he said. "So I enrolled. Now I'm an ID card-carrying Raven!"

The Raven Life

Fisseler asked friends and colleagues for recommendations, seeking a professor known for being interesting, engaging, and knowledgeable. The suggestions led him toward the sciences, and he registered for Malcolm Sadler's physical geology course at the Central Campus.

Sadler considers Fisseler the "prototype student" — one who studies, asks questions, is always on time for lectures and labs, and is alert and studious.

"Gene was lost at first, learning the new technology, but eventually figured it out," Sadler said. "I'm sure he had some trepidation regarding how to connect with his peers, many of whom are much younger than he. But Gene loves to connect with others, and he said everyone has been kind and gracious."

Numerous staff and students helped Fisseler find his way around campus.

"They were polite, helpful, and extremely generous with their time," he said. "I imagine they looked at me and figured someone my age needed all



the help they could offer. Most ended our encounter by asking what class I was teaching. I got a good laugh at their expressions when I told them I was a first-year student. I'm probably 50 years older than most of my classmates."

Fisseler is just like any other student but with one unique characteristic.

"Gene has real-world experience, and that's what sets him apart from his classmates," Sadler said. "In fact, geology can really only be experienced through travel, and Gene has been some places! Many of the other students haven't even left Houston."

The two have managed to learn from each other.

"He has suggested several geologically oriented books to read," Sadler said. "So Gene stays up to date on many of the topics that I'm actually teaching currently."

Future plans

Fisseler's focus remains his activities as a Texas master naturalist.

He works with the Armand Bayou Nature Center Foundation, Exploration Green Conservancy, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Project, Galveston Bay Foundation, and Port Houston Commission Community Advisory Council, all in addition to serving as a board member with the San Jacinto College Foundation.

As for college, Fisseler's San Jac experience has been "extremely positive," and he's considering auditing Sadler's historical geology class next.

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

Through Oct. 16

SFA Printmaking Exhibition

Varies

North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1)

Sept. 28

Melodrama: “Battle Cattle Booty Betrayed”

2:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$10 | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

Sept. 29

Registration opens for spring and winter mini term

Oct. 2

Financial Literacy Networking

6-7 p.m.

Generation Park Campus |
Contact sjc.cfe@sjcd.edu

Oct. 17

7th Annual Senior Wellness Expo

9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Health resources, food, giveaways, and more | Central Campus, LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (C45)

Oct. 23-25 & Oct. 30-Nov. 1

“Frogs!”

Varies

Tickets: \$7 | South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Blackbox Theatre (S15.135)

Oct. 27-Nov. 20

“Joe Clark: How to Say I Love You in 200 Words or Less”

Varies

North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1)

Oct. 30

“The Ominous Passage: Pop-up Art Show”

TBA

North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1)

Nov. 5

Steel Band Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C13)

Nov. 6

Central Choir Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Monte Blue Music Building (C5)

Nov. 7

Veteran and Military Affiliate Resource Fair

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Central Campus, LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (C45)

Nov. 13

Financial Literacy Networking

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Central Campus, LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (C45)

Nov. 17

Guitar Ensemble Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Monte Blue Music Building (C5)



Nov. 24-30

Thanksgiving Break

Closed

All campuses and online

Dec. 4

Practicum Student Showcase

TBA

South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (S15.151)

Dec. 4

North Art and Design Winter Art Sale

9 a.m.-9 p.m.

South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (S15.151)

Dec. 4

Jazz Ensemble Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Monte Blue Music Building (C5)



Dec. 4-6 & 11-13

“Santa’s Christmas Magic”

7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$15 | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

Dec. 5-6

Evolve Dance Concert

7 p.m.

South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (S15.151)

Dec. 10

Wind Ensemble Concert

7 p.m.

Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C13)

Dec. 11

Financial Literacy Networking

6-7 p.m.

Generation Park Campus |
Contact sjc.cfe@sjcd.edu

Dec. 12

Fall Commencement

9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Grace Church

Dec. 22-Jan. 1

Winter Break

Closed

No non-instructional activity

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar or call 281-998-6150.

San Jacinto College
4624 Fairmont Parkway
Pasadena, TX 77504

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
JACKSONVILLE, FL
PERMIT # 1644



DISCOVER A

NEW YOU

SPRING CLASSES BEGIN JANUARY 12

Apply, register, and pay at sanjac.edu

FIVE CONVENIENT CAMPUSES AND ONLINE

CENTRAL CAMPUS
8060 SPENCER HWY.
PASADENA, TX 77505

MARITIME CAMPUS
3700 OLD HWY. 146
LA PORTE, TX 77571

SOUTH CAMPUS
13735 BEAMER RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77089

GENERATION PARK CAMPUS
13455 LOCKWOOD RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77044

NORTH CAMPUS
5800 UVALDE RD.
HOUSTON, TX 77049

SAN JAC ONLINE
[SANJAC.EDU/ONLINE](https://sanjac.edu/online)