2. News from Your College

3. Chancellor receives prestigious Quasar Award

5. Students enjoy STEAM Fair
San Jacinto College launches Bachelor of Science in Nursing

San Jacinto College is launching a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-to-BSN) program this fall at the Central Campus.

As San Jac’s first baccalaureate degree, the program will give working registered nurses a convenient, cost-effective pathway to marketability and professional growth.

The application period for the first cohort will be March 16 to June 30, 2020.

The hybrid program will combine in-person and distance learning in an eight-week course format, with classes costing the same low tuition rate as San Jac’s other credit courses.

In 2010, the Institute of Medicine recommended that 80 percent of RNs hold a BSN degree by 2020. In 2017, the Texas Legislature authorized community colleges to offer workforce-related bachelor’s degree programs, including BSN.

Dr. Rhonda Bell, Central Campus dean of health and natural sciences, said the program answers the call of area workforce needs while fitting RNs’ busy schedules.

“We’re nurses. We know how it is to juggle families, school, and work. From the very beginning, we made sure not to lose that vision,” Dr. Bell said. “We want the nurses in this community to have the opportunity to return to school, but we also want the school to meet them where they are.”

Although the BSN program is designed for one-year completion, students interested in part-time status should contact the department chair.

The program has received all required approvals from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas Board of Nursing, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

For prerequisites, admission requirements, and other information, visit www.sanjac.edu/bsn or email sanjacbsn@sjcd.edu.

San Jacinto College welcomes higher education commissioner

San Jacinto College welcomed newly appointed Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Harrison Keller during a whirlwind visit Jan. 17.

Dr. Keller took the helm of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in October 2019. He joined College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer, members of the board of trustees and strategic leadership team, and Texas Association of Community Colleges President Jacob Fraire for a private luncheon at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (CPET).

San Jacinto College officials shared the College’s history, achievements, and priorities and learned about the commissioner’s vision for higher education in Texas.

Chancellor Hellyer highlighted board initiatives to reduce costs for students and increase their chances for lifelong success—such as the Open Books program that has eliminated $6.5 million in textbook costs to date and a simplified tuition model that creates one tuition rate based on residency. She also described major achievements in the past five years, including the Maritime Technology and Training Center, the EDGE Center for aerospace training, a coming Bachelor of Science degree in nursing, and CPET, the Gulf Coast region’s largest petrochemical training facility.

In 2018-19, San Jacinto College awarded 7,654 associate degrees and certificates, and in fall 2019, enrollment reached 32,485 students. When asked about completion intensity, Dr. Hellyer explained that the 168 percent increase in awards over the last 11 years correlates with a 20 percent increase in enrollment. This has resulted from the College’s focus on credential completion, university transfer, and workforce preparation.

“It was an honor to share with Commissioner Keller the incredible work happening at San Jacinto College by our faculty, staff, and students,” Dr. Hellyer said. “We are excited about his vision for higher education in Texas and look forward to working together to better the higher education landscape across the state.”

A sixth-generation Texan, Dr. Keller has more than 20 years of experience in higher education partnerships, budget, policy, and administration. Before THECB, he most recently served at The University of Texas at Austin as the deputy to the president for strategy and policy and as a professor of practice.

CPET, Maritime Campus welcome Japan delegates

San Jacinto College welcomed visitors from Pasadena’s sister city, Hadano, Japan, in early January.

Twelve delegates from Hadano—city hall staff, board of education members, teachers, and students—visited the Pasadena area Jan. 6-11.

During their stay, the delegates toured the College’s LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (CPET), exploring custom industrial labs. They also visited the Maritime Technology and Training Center, where they practiced steering vessels in simulated bridge rooms.

“We had both (San Jac) facilities recommended for the visit due to the programs offered. Our guests were very impressed with both visits,” said Gayle Holder Carter, president of the Pasadena Sister City Association.

In addition, the Hadano delegates toured and made presentations at local K-12 schools, the San Jacinto Monument, NASA Johnson Space Center, Japanese-owned company Kuraray, and other places. Most stayed in private homes to experience family life in a Houston suburb and enjoyed local culinary experiences.

Sister cities for 55 years, Pasadena and Hadano alternate visits annually through the Pasadena-Hadano Sister City Association.
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE CHANCELLOR HONORED WITH PRESTIGIOUS QUASAR AWARD

By Amanda Fenwick
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP) honored San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer with the prestigious Quasar Award for Economic Development Excellence last month during an awards dinner at South Shore Harbour Resort and Conference Center.

The Quasar Award is presented annually to an outstanding elected official or business leader who has demonstrated a strong, continual effort to support the business foundations of the greater Bay Area Houston communities.

“While the Quasar plaque has my name on it, this is really for the San Jacinto College community,” said Dr. Hellyer. “The work at San Jacinto College is accomplished by an amazing team of employees. The success of San Jacinto College is due to a strong and visionary board of trustees who establish the strategic goals for the College and focus on the success of our students.”

Throughout the last decade, Dr. Hellyer has worked with the board of trustees and College employees to create transformational change at the College. As part of that change, San Jacinto College has enhanced the student experience and improved educational accessibility. When the new Generation Park Campus opens this fall – the fifth campus for the College – it will complete the construction of 16 new facilities over the last decade. Additional facilities have also been renovated during that time, all to meet the needs of today’s students. Among those buildings are the Maritime Technology and Training Center, which opened March 2016; the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology, which opened September 2019; the EDGE Center at the Houston Spaceport, which opened January 2020; and the new Generation Park Campus, which will open fall 2020.

“Dr. Hellyer is a shining example of excellence that the Quasar Award exemplifies,” said Bob Mitchell, BAHEP president, during his remarks at the award dinner. “She has taken San Jacinto College into the 21st century with the addition of programs that are essential to building and maintaining the skilled workforce that is fundamental to the economic well-being of the region.”

San Jacinto College into the 21st century with the addition of programs that are essential to building and maintaining the skilled workforce that is fundamental to the economic well-being of the region.”

Quasar Award continued on page 7

Photo courtesy of San Jacinto College

At the awards dinner were (from left) Bob Mitchell, president, Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership (BAHEP); Quasar Award recipient Dr. Benda Hellyer, Chancellor, San Jacinto College; and United States Congressman Brian Babin.

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

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<th>DATE</th>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>Women’s Health Expo-Women’s History Month</td>
<td>11 a.m.-2 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 3</td>
<td>U.S. Marine Corps Jazz Band Concert</td>
<td>6-7 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>Vida Activa después del Cancer #9 (Spanish)</td>
<td>10 a.m.-12 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 5</td>
<td>Mind Trekkers Adventures in STEM Festival Family Night</td>
<td>6-8 p.m.</td>
<td>Central Campus, Building 18</td>
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<td>March 5</td>
<td>Baseball vs. Blinn</td>
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<td>March 5</td>
<td>A Matter of Balance Fitness for Adults 55+</td>
<td>1-1:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td>Community Fitness</td>
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<td>March 9-13</td>
<td>Spring Break (No Classes Held)</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Baseball vs. Galveston</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>Softball vs. Laredo College</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Softball vs. Coastal Bend College</td>
<td>2 p.m.; 5 p.m.</td>
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<td>March 23</td>
<td>Baseball vs. Alvin</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Baseball vs. Navarro</td>
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<td>March 25</td>
<td>Active Living After Cancer (ALAC) Session #2</td>
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<td>Vida Activa después del Cancer #11 (Spanish)</td>
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<td>March 25-28</td>
<td>&quot;The Perils of Truly Sweet&quot; theatre production</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>&quot;The Perils of Truly Sweet&quot; theatre production</td>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>South Campus, C13</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Spring Installment Payment Plan Due Date</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>All campuses and sanjac.edu</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Active Living After Cancer (ALAC) Session #3</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.</td>
<td>Central Campus, C1.108</td>
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All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu.
SAN JAC TO CONSTRUCT NATION’S LARGEST
MASS TIMBER INSTRUCTIONAL BUILDING

By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Despite humble beginnings, the new instructional building at the San Jacinto College Central Campus will represent a first for the region and nation. When its doors open in fall 2021, it will be the largest instructional building in the U.S. constructed from mass timber.

The 120,000-square-foot building will reuse its predecessors’ foundations, cost less than typical construction, and arrive in pieces like a Sears catalog kit house. Replacing aging Anderson Tech and Ball Tech on the Central Campus’ quadrangle, the building will use a centuries-old technology that is experiencing a 21st-century rebirth.

Like architectural beams of the past, mass timber sections—layers of wood laminated together in cross-pattern direction—will not only support the structure but provide natural beauty.

“It’s an organic material. It feels good when you look at it,” said Chuck Smith, San Jacinto College associate vice chancellor of fiscal initiatives.

Legacy expansion

Smith is heading the construction project, which is part of the 2015 San Jac Tomorrow Capital Improvement Program.

Still in the design development phase, the mass timber building will contain almost 60 classrooms for math, pre-engineering, college prep, English, and humanities courses. Last year, San Jacinto College received a $100,000 U.S. Forest Service grant toward building design and preconstruction education. San Jac was one of only 10 institutions in the nation to receive such a grant and the only community college among recipients.

After Anderson Tech and Ball Tech come down this fall, new construction will begin around November. The instructional building will feature a brick exterior that ties it to the Central Campus’ “legacy” buildings, and its two-story lobby will showcase cathedral-style arches and a stone bas-relief salvaged from the Anderson Tech facade. This bas-relief—which includes land survey equipment, a chemical plant, and a compass—tells the story of local industries in the College’s early years.

Mass timber benefits

Beauty aside, mass timber presents many advantages. Chief is cost containment in a fluctuating construction market. According to Smith, design and construction take about three years, and in the past five years, Houston has witnessed escalating steel prices and a shrinking labor supply.

Amid the steel and concrete jungle, San Jacinto College considered mass timber for its environmental sustainability and cost stability.

“The College is not in the business of promoting mass timber as a technology,” Smith said, “but this was a cost-effective way for us to provide the space to educate our students.”

Mass timber buildings require fewer laborers, are quicker to construct, and use less production energy than steel or concrete. After unloading the numbered mass timber pieces from a truck, workers simply piece the building together like LEGOs.

In fires, mass timber performs better than steel. While steel melts and bends, mass timber’s exterior chars and hardens, protecting its core.

Eventually, you arrive at the point to say, ‘Why aren’t we already doing this?’” Smith said.

Mass timber is finally picking up in the U.S. San Jacinto College stands among the second wave of adopters, learning from first innovators’ trial and error.

“We’re pursuing this because we’re resource conscious and forward thinking. We are more comfortable with the solutions mass timber offers than the challenges it presents,” Smith said.

Conference host

In mid-February, San Jacinto College and the City of Pasadena cohosted the Texas Gulf Coast Mass Timber Conference at the Central Campus. The event convened experts and local contractors, architects, engineers, and building code officials for topics like current mass timber projects worldwide, contractor experience with this technology, and construction design for natural disasters.

“If we’re going to be one of the first institutions to build this kind of building in Texas or the greater Houston area, it’s part of our responsibility to educate local construction companies and trades on how these buildings come together,” Smith said.

From the beginning, San Jacinto College has collaborated with the city to ensure the mass timber construction meets code and is as safe as any other College structure. The College’s board of trustees also gave its thumbs-up.

“When we were able to prove to them that we were doing our due diligence working collaboratively with the city and forest service, they were more than happy to have us explore further,” Smith said.

Thought, practice leader

As learning evolves from instructor lectures to student collaboration, campuses must also adapt. As a higher education institution, San Jacinto College strives to be not only a thought leader but also a practice leader.

Mike Harris, director of construction services, says the College’s new construction—particularly the mass timber instructional building—honors the old while incorporating modern technology, energy efficiency standards, and student needs.

“Our previous projects were based on legacy, but now we’re focusing on the future. Instead of looking in the rearview mirror, we’re looking through the windshield,” Harris said.
By Andrea Vasquez  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College hosted more than 170 Pasadena ISD students and their family members at its South Campus for the annual Pasadena ISD STEAM Fair on Jan. 24.

The STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) Fair featured science projects judged by San Jacinto College faculty and students and Pasadena ISD faculty, campus tours, and activities at the mobile Chevron Fab Lab.

One of the anticipated tours included a look at the College’s health science labs, led by Dr. Kira Beal, San Jacinto College South Campus department chair of health sciences, where students observed anatomy and physiology college students completing a dissection. In addition, while visiting the library, students engaged with an interactive art gallery exhibition and learned about the early college high school programs available to them.

“I love seeing the interactions between our faculty and the Pasadena ISD students, and I really enjoy seeing how excited our San Jac student volunteers are about teaching these younger students,” said Lambrini Nicopoulos, San Jacinto College South Campus department chair of life sciences. “Our ISD partnerships allow the College to connect with future students and to encourage them to pursue their interests in STEM occupations. We want to continue fostering a positive relationship with those students, faculty, and families by providing a rich scientific environment that encourages mentoring, critical thinking, exploration, and research.”

In addition to the daytime activities, students and their families enjoyed some similar activities and experiments that evening for a STEAM Expo prior to the STEAM Fair awards ceremony.

“Our annual STEAM Fair allows students to be engaged in STEM-based activities while also reminding the student and their parents that there is a highly acclaimed local college right in their backyard that can serve as an excellent starting point on that pathway to an exciting STEM career,” said Holly Yoes, Pasadena ISD curriculum and instruction specialist for secondary science. “We believe the district’s partnership with San Jacinto College allows us to have continued conversations aimed at ensuring that we are preparing our students to gain essential STEM-based skill sets that will set them up for STEM success at the college level and beyond.”

For more information about the College’s STEM programs, visit sanjac.edu/STEM.
South Campus celebrated Lunar New Year with a Dragon Dance performance.

North Campus honored student employee and former SGA vice president Elisandra Garcia as she heads off to her new internship.

Gabe Vargas showed us how hooked he is on San Jac even when away from the campus.

Honda PACT program students were greeted with an unexpected passenger during a routine inspection.

Members of the San Jacinto College Audio Engineering Student Organization paused backstage at Victor Wooten’s Bass Extremes concert at Central Campus.

A North Campus pastry class showed off its impressive sugar flower cake decorating technique.

North Campus biology students participated in a service-learning project at Sheldon Lake State Park for World Wetlands Day.
SERVING THE HOMELESS A CALLING
FOR PARALEGAL GRADUATE ERIN RUSSELL

By Cheryl P. Rose
CORRESPONDENT

Two years into university, Erin Russell had changed majors six times.
“I had zero idea what I wanted to do, so I stopped going,” she said.
Instead, Russell got married, followed her husband through several career
relocations, picked up general jobs, and became a mother. But it bothered
her that she hadn’t finished and gotten a degree. As a teen, she thought she
wanted to be a lawyer, so when her child started school, she decided to try again.
“I thought I’d start small and

see if I even liked the legal field, so that
led me to the paralegal program at San
Jacinto College,” Russell said.
“It was flexible, which was what
I needed, and it was one of the only
programs in my area accredited by the
American Bar Association, a big plus.
On my first day of class, I realized
I loved it—from the subject matter to
the professors to the school.”

Part of the paralegal associate
degree program requires 240 hours of
internship. Happily, Russell connected
with The Beacon. A nonprofit
organization that serves the Houston
homeless community, The Beacon was
just starting a legal program to help
in cases for the homeless. Initially called
the Cathedral Justice Program, it’s now
Beacon Law.
“I fell in love with the project,”
Russell said. “At the time I started, there
was a staff of three attorneys and two

part-time volunteer legal assistants,
one of which was me. They hired me
full time in 2015, the year I graduated.
We now have a staff of 15. We’ve grown
quickly in a short time.”

Russell is now the special projects
manager at Beacon Law.
“We deal with those who are homeless
or in danger of homelessness,” she says.

“The homeless have the same needs as
everyone else but don’t have a way to
access the justice system. It’s an honor
and privilege to work with them and
help them get back on their feet and
reestablish in society.”

Legal issues include barriers to
housing, health care, and other services.
“My favorite part of my job is the
clients,” Russell said. “I love that at
the end of the day, there is a real person
that I helped.”

Now working on a bachelor’s degree
in public service leadership, Russell
encourages students to follow
their passions.
“There is a difference between a job,
a career, and a calling,” she said. “Jobs
are necessary and what gets you from
point A to point B, but if you can find
something that lights your fire, it makes
getting up each day so much better.”
Surrounded by monuments of history, industries and maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the citizens of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA and Aa2 by Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s. San Jacinto College is a 2019 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence Top 10 institution, a 2017 Aspen Prize Rising Star Award recipient, and an Achieving the Dream Leader College. The College serves approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually and offers eight areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. San Jacinto College’s impact on the region totals $1.3 billion in added income, which supports 13,044 jobs.

**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.

A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow’s community leaders. For more than 20 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.

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