

# Nominations for Spotlighting Our Success 2025

## Excellence Award (Any SBVC Employee)

### *Amy Avelar, Faculty, Chemistry*

This year has been incredibly transformative under the vision, hard work, and dedication of Amy Avelar for her deep dive into the department's organic chemistry lab manuals. Over the years, our faculty have worked to create in-house lab manuals tailored to our program with an emphasis on student safety. This year, Amy finished this work by fiercely advocating for the organic chemistry classes and collaborating directly with lab technicians to address every detail of the organic chemistry 212/213 series. She worked to ensure students not only understood every step of the process but could safely and consistently produce organic synthesis products. Amy's hard work will ensure our students get the most out of our program without costing them anything. Please join me in honoring the hard work of Amy Avelar.

### *Thomas Berry, Faculty, Communications*

Thomas Berry should be recognized for the excellence award for managing his many roles on campus and providing a valuable voice in each area. His work is always thoroughly done, and his institutional knowledge is deep. He is reliable as a researcher, leader, colleague, and instructor. Thomas is currently the Curriculum Committee Chair and serves on the executive team of academic senate. As the Student Learning Outcomes lead, he collects campus-wide SLO data from faculty and is responsible for creating reports of this information. He is consistent in his friendly reminders to complete SLO's. Additionally, he has participated in the common course numbering task force at the state level and has helped with the process of CCN here at SBVC. He also continues to be a voice for ZTC and works on the team for OER integration on campus. Thomas Berry holds an MFA in Theatre Education, an MS in Instructional Design and Technology, an MA in Educational Administration, and an MA in Communications. He has over 23 years of teaching experience and has a number of certifications including ACUE, and the peer online course review certificate. As an instructor, Thomas is extremely knowledgeable but approachable, and he interacts with students with understanding and compassion. His many prestigious degrees, along with his experience and dedication to the campus, demonstrate his expertise, currency, and excellence in his position as instructor and program lead positions.

### *Anthony Blacksher, Faculty Chair, Ethnic Studies*

Anthony goes above and beyond to make all associate faculty feel like they matter in the department. He not only personally fought for my equivalency approval but also introduced me to staff and faculty that improved student classroom experiences and my professional development. Anthony is the best Faculty Chair I have ever had in my 15+ years working in higher education.

### *Nia Bowens-McLeod, Administrative Assistant I, Transfer*

## *and Career Services*

Nia deserves the award because she goes above and beyond to help students in any capacity she can. She is a true asset to the SBVC campus.

## *Pavel Bratulin, Director, Marketing Creative Services & Public Affairs*

Saying farewell to the Liberal Arts Building was a momentous event. Paul did an exceptional job making the arrangements. While I don't like having seen so many buildings go away on this campus, the way with which we honored the stories and the inhabitants, past and present, of the LA building was done reverently and festively. For this event alone, I nominate Paul Bratulin for the Excellence Award. Excellent job!

## *Michelle Crocfer, Student Services Coordinator, Student Accessibility Services*

Michelle Crocfer is deeply committed to supporting students with disabilities, creating an inclusive and encouraging environment where they can thrive. Their dedication, patience, and innovative approach to student success make a meaningful impact every day. They go above and beyond to ensure students feel supported, empowered, and capable of achieving their goals, making them truly deserving of this Excellence Award.

## *Laura Estrada, College Nurse, Student Health Services*

As our college nurse, she consistently goes above and beyond for both her department and the students on campus. Laura is a compassionate and dedicated healthcare professional who approaches every student interaction with empathy, ensuring they feel heard, supported, and cared for. She is an invaluable resource to our campus, providing not only medical care but also education and advocacy for student health and wellness. Laura is proactive in addressing student needs, whether by coordinating services, developing health initiatives, or simply being a reassuring presence for those in distress. She works tirelessly to support her colleagues, fostering a collaborative and positive environment within the department. Her commitment to student success extends beyond the clinic—she actively engages in campus-wide efforts to promote well-being, ensuring that students have the resources they need to thrive. Laura's dedication, kindness, and unwavering support make a lasting impact on our campus community, and she is truly deserving of this recognition.

## *Patrice Hollis, Coordinator, Financial Aid*

Patrice shows her dedication to the college, students and office procedures by assuring that her responsibilities are met, especially when it involves processing students' awards and disbursing funds. She maintains a level of professionalism, with deep regard for all students and the office rapport.

## *Gloria Kracher, Custodian, Facilities, Maintenance & Operations*

Always eager to assist and consistently goes above and beyond to support the needs of the campus.

## *Tania Laguna, Counselor, Extended Opportunity Programs & Services*

It is my great pleasure to nominate Tania Laguna for the Excellence Award. Throughout her time at SBVC, Tania has shown an unwavering dedication to student success. Her commitment to her role is evident in every aspect of her work—she is consistently reliable, hardworking, and compassionate. Tania goes above and beyond to ensure that students receive the support they need to thrive, always demonstrating a deep investment in their academic and personal growth. Her dependability and unwavering dedication have made a lasting impact on the students and colleagues she works with. Tania's work exemplifies excellence, and she truly deserves this recognition for her ongoing contributions to the success of SBVC and its students.

## *Yvette Lee, Faculty, English*

Yvette Lee has shown outstanding dedication to supporting students with disabilities, both inside and outside the classroom. Through their commitment to accessibility and inclusion, they ensure that every student has the resources and encouragement needed to succeed. Their support goes beyond academics—they actively engage in student life, attending extracurricular events and fostering a sense of belonging. Their unwavering advocacy and genuine care make a lasting impact on the students they serve, making them truly deserving of this Excellence Award.

## *Craig Luke, Counselor , First Year Experience*

Dr. Luke is an inspiration to work with. His dedication to both his students and his team is truly remarkable. Dr. Luke continues to be a mentor and all-around kind, intelligent co-worker. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with Dr. Luke.

## *Marie Maghuyop, Student Engagement Specialist, Office of Student Life*

Marie repeatedly goes above and beyond for the SBVC Votes Task Force. We give her ideas, and she makes them happen! She is amazing at her job.

## *Dinora Menendez, Custodian , Facilities, Maintenance and Operations*

It is with great honor and heartfelt appreciation that I nominate Dinora Menendez, our dedicated Custodian in the Facilities, Maintenance, and Operations Department, for the Excellence Award. The transition from the Liberal Arts building to The Village was challenging for a lot of us. I remember a particularly rainy day when I was settling into my new office. Navigating a new space is never easy, and the added difficulties of securing keys, adapting to the environment, and addressing facility concerns only made the process more stressful. On that rainy day, Dinora happened to be nearby and insisted on helping me move boxes into my office, turning a long and inconvenient walk from the athletic field into a moment of genuine kindness. Her warmth and concern made the task far less exhausting. Not only did she make sure that our new offices were clean and organized, but she also played a key role (no pun intended!) in helping us settle in by directing us to the right people for things like obtaining keys for newly secured offices and reporting safety concerns, including rain leaks and other maintenance issues. It is important to acknowledge individuals like Dinora, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to support the day-to-day operations of our institution. Her efforts are essential to the smooth functioning of our campus. I wholeheartedly support and nominate Dinora

Menendez for the Excellence Award. Her dedication and effort make her truly deserving of this recognition!

### *Bethany Tasaka, Faculty, Math*

Bethany Tasaka has made a profound impact at SBVC through both faculty leadership and advocacy for the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) community. Since 2017, Bethany has demonstrated excellence in teaching, going above and beyond to create supportive and engaging learning environments for students. For instance, Bethany is involved in the Puente Project Community of Practice: Mathematics Justice, to ensure that the math she teaches is taught with a racial equity lens. Beyond the classroom, Bethany has improved institutional processes at SBVC, such as with curriculum, outcomes, and program review. Her leadership as Interim Dean of Math, then Science provided stability and vision through critical transitions. Bethany is also a champion for the API community. Bethany co-founded the SBCCD API Association, building a space for employee connection, mentorship, and celebration. She continues to serve as President, where she consistently uplifts the API community at SBVC by ensuring representation and equity. Bethany was instrumental in expanding support for API students through the Taytayan learning community, helping students belong and succeed. However, her advocacy extends beyond campus. For instance, Bethany participated in Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP); co-founded and chaired the Academic Senate for CCCs API Caucus; contributed to the Asian Pacifics in Higher Education Conference planning team; and more. Her commitment to education and equity is unmatched!

## Innovator of the Year (Any SBVC Employee)

### *Mandi Batalo, Faculty Chair, Art*

For nearly two decades, Dr. Mandi Batalo has been an integral part of our institution, serving as both a dedicated full-time faculty member and the esteemed Department Chair of the Art Department. Those who know Mandi know of her belief in the transformative power of the arts and their connection to mental health, mindfulness, and overall well-being. She has long been a steadfast advocate for the Gresham Gallery, ensuring that its exhibitions and installations are not only celebrated but also serve as a catalyst for creativity and engagement across campus. Mandi never misses an opportunity to highlight the invaluable role of the gallery in enriching our educational community. Mandi's doctoral research, personal mindfulness journey, and creative vision have converged and led to the introduction of Sound Baths and Gentle Yoga sessions in The Gresham Gallery. In collaboration with Professional Development, Mandi has hosted these events over the past year and a half, and they have flourished in popularity. Mandi frequently partners with other departments to create interdisciplinary experiences that foster collaboration, innovation, and creative exploration. Her efforts not only strengthen academic connections but also expand awareness of The Gresham Gallery, making it a welcoming and dynamic space for all. Mandi embodies the true spirit of innovation, creativity, and inclusivity. It is an honor to recognize Dr. Mandi Batalo for her creativity, innovation, and contributions.

### *Dr. Danielle "Dani" Graham, Faculty, Psychology*

Dr. Dani Graham is dedicated to providing her students with firsthand experience in data and research. She continuously updates her course content to reflect real-world developments, encouraging students to pursue their own research questions. Dr. Dani actively collaborates with

faculty from other departments and the Research Department, creating interdisciplinary opportunities that enrich the learning experience. By fostering innovation and curiosity, she makes learning engaging and relevant far beyond the classroom.

### *Gabriel Martinez Lazaro, Research Analyst, Research, Planning, & Institutional Effectiveness*

In five words: Gabriel is a data genius. Gabriel's work is nothing short of transformative. He has streamlined processes at Valley to make what we do more efficient and more effective through innovative solutions. For instance, Gabriel has worked out a system using his programming background to accurately automate the tracking of Full Time Equivalent Students (FTES). He has significantly improved how we manage and interpret critical institutional data. Gabriel has also taken the initiative to master complex financial and enrollment metrics, such as the student-centered funding formula (SCFF) and fiscal calendars. His deep understanding of these metrics is invaluable, preventing us from floundering and ensuring we remain data-informed in our decision-making. But Gabriel's innovative impact goes beyond his technical skills. Gabriel is innovative in the way that he asks critical research questions that shape our institutional strategies. For instance, he recently conducted a study looking at waitlisted students to see what happens to them, finding that many of them are not successfully enrolled. As a plus, he used really cool, innovative charts to demonstrate this. However, it's not just about the data piece- Gabriel holds discussions to address what the data says, ensuring that we turn data into action. Gabriel's innovative thinking has made tangible differences at Valley, and for that, I wholeheartedly nominate Gabriel for Innovator of the Year!

## Outstanding Service Award (Any SBVC Employee)

### *Cynthia Bernal, Senior Student Services Tech NextUp/Guardians, Student Services*

Cynthia's dedication to our foster youth in the EOPS/Next Up program is nothing short of inspiring. Her unwavering passion, compassion, and commitment have transformed the lives of countless students. Cynthia's tireless advocacy ensures foster youth feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. She coordinates program efforts, guides students through challenges, and connects them with vital resources — often working beyond her scheduled hours to ensure no student is left behind. Her dedication extends into the community, where she actively seeks services to improve students' well-being. What makes Cynthia truly special is her heart. She greets every student with warmth, listens with empathy, and instills hope in those who need it most. Her students know they have someone who believes in them — someone who will never give up on their potential. Cynthia's impact is immeasurable. She doesn't just change lives — she inspires students to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams. Her selfless dedication makes her a true blessing to our students and our institution. I wholeheartedly recommend Cynthia Bernal for this recognition. She is a shining example of what it means to lead with compassion and purpose.

### *Keynasia Buffong, Coordinator, Transfer and Career Services*

Keynasia is an amazing employee at Valley College. She is willing to jump in and help students with

any challenges they may come across, and she does it with Grace. SBVC is lucky to have someone like Keynasia who is willing to give the shirt off her back if it will benefit SBVC students.

### *Carol Damgen, Faculty, Communications*

Carol's dedication to SBVC students, colleagues, and the campus community is tireless. I chose this word because this semester, she has given so much of herself, her time, and her energy. When the LA building moved to the Village, Carol was there on the weekend the semester began and working late into the evening preparing, decorating, and stocking the honors lounge. She has gone above and beyond in planning events for honors students, including mixers, presentation opportunities, and a planetarium visit that was even open to honors families. On many occasions, I have seen her talking with students that were not honors or communications students, but listening and literally walking with them to the resource or faculty member who could best answer their need. In addition to exceeding her teaching and honors responsibilities, she is also the advisor for the Communications Club and serves as an academic senator. She always 'shows up' for students in need, her fellow faculty, and this campus as a whole.

### *Laura Estrada, College Nurse, Student Health Services*

As our college nurse, she consistently goes above and beyond for both her department and the students on campus. Laura is a compassionate and dedicated healthcare professional who approaches every student interaction with empathy, ensuring they feel heard, supported, and cared for. She is an invaluable resource to our campus, providing not only medical care but also education and advocacy for student health and wellness. Laura is proactive in addressing student needs, whether by coordinating services, developing health initiatives, or simply being a reassuring presence for those in distress. She works tirelessly to support her colleagues, fostering a collaborative and positive environment within the department. Her commitment to student success extends beyond the clinic—she actively engages in campus-wide efforts to promote well-being, ensuring that students have the resources they need to thrive. Laura's dedication, kindness, and unwavering support make a lasting impact on our campus community, and she is truly deserving of this recognition.

### *Aida Gil, Administrative Assistant III, First Year Experience*

Aida consistently demonstrates exceptional efficiency and dedication to supporting our team. She plays a vital role in ensuring smooth day-to-day operations, coordinating meetings, and handling communications. She's proactive with solving problems and maintains organization in a fast-paced environment.

### *Tanya Gomez, Lead Food Service Worker, Food Service*

Tanya always goes above and beyond to make every experience a great one. She serves her customers with a great attitude and always has a smile on her face. She makes every interaction a personal one and always puts her customers first.

### *Brandy Heller, Administrative Assistant, Athletics/The Huddle*

Brandy Heller is the administrative assistant for The Huddle. When anyone walks into Gym 139, hers is the first face they see and voice that welcomes them. She is such a warm and kind individual who goes above and beyond in her care for the student athletes she works with. Not only does Brandy help

student athletes enroll in classes, keep their study time, and manage their schedules, but she does this on a constant basis. She helps them contact coaches and teachers, manage their grades, and register as a student. She works with students from all sports and does so in a way that makes those students want to stay, visit The Huddle, and remain on campus. And most importantly, monitors each student's number of units and grades so that they can play on their team! She also communicates with the faculty teaching athletic cohort classes and follows up with students in those classes when needed. Beyond this, Brandy shows up for student athletes. She attends so many games, cheering for SBVC and encouraging those student athletes she works with behind the scenes. I nominate Brandy Heller for extraordinary service. Our athletics department benefits because of the work she does and the extra thought and care she gives to each individual athlete on this campus.

## *Claudia Herrera, Library Media Clerk, Library*

For more than a decade, Claudia has been one of the faces of the SBVC Library. Often the first person a visitor sees, she has built a rapport with the students and staff that is invaluable for the Library. She goes above and beyond to make the library a welcoming place for all visitors, providing access to library resources and reserve materials as well as mentorship and a friendly ear to students in need. She truly and emphatically embodies the SBVC mission of putting students at the center of everything we do. Within the department, Claudia is an endless source of enthusiasm and camaraderie. She can always be counted on to initiate spur-of-the-moment staff meals, to decorate our workspace for the holidays, and to widen our ever-growing network of staff and faculty who enrich the library by their involvement - especially in our potlucks! The library would, without a doubt, be a much poorer place without her presence and her efforts. Thank you, Claudia, for everything you do!

## *Matthew Kim, Web Developer, Marketing, Creative Services & Public Affairs*

### Nomination #1:

Matthew consistently demonstrates exceptional dedication and responsiveness, always going above and beyond to assist his colleagues across campus. His enthusiasm for supporting others is evident in the proactive and timely manner in which he addresses challenges, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently and effectively. Whether troubleshooting urgent issues, providing guidance, or streamlining processes, Matthew's contributions directly enhance the success of numerous departments. His collaborative spirit, problem-solving abilities, and commitment to excellence make him an invaluable asset to the SBVC team.

### Nomination #2:

Matt Kim manages the web development for the entire college and consistently goes out of his way to support his own department and others with trainings, creating, and maintenance. His work on the CPL website got national recognition and there have been countless other examples.

### Nomination #3:

Matt consistently impresses me with his efficiency and positive attitude. He works quickly and effectively, always delivering high-quality results. One of his standout contributions has been his work on updating the Foundation's web pages, making them polished and functional.

## *Tania Laguna, Adjunct Counselor , Extended Opportunity*

## *Programs & Services*

I am honored to nominate Tania Laguna for the Spotighting Our Success 2025 recognition. As an adjunct counselor in the EOPS department, Tania consistently demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to student success and campus engagement. Her dedication, compassion, and unwavering support make her an invaluable member of our team and a powerful advocate for students. Tania's impact extends far beyond her assigned duties. She actively participates in campus events, often volunteering her time outside of her scheduled hours. Her selfless efforts and dedication to our campus community inspire both students and colleagues alike. As a mentor to many DREAMer students, Tania has provided crucial guidance and support, ensuring these students feel empowered and connected. Her work advocating for marginalized populations has made a lasting impact on our campus. In addition to her counseling role, Tania is the co-advisor for the Dreamers Club, where she continues to uplift and inspire students. Her mentorship has empowered students to become leaders and pursue their goals with confidence. Tania's students consistently express deep gratitude for her thoughtful advice and genuine care. Her efforts extend to supporting various departments during events and activities, always willing to lend a helping hand wherever needed. Tania's passion for student success drives her to seek additional training and stay informed about resources to better serve students. Her commitment to growth e

## *Marie Maghuyop, Student Engagement Specialist, Office of Student Life*

I'm honored to nominate Marie for the Outstanding Service Award due to her dedication to students and colleagues. As an integral part of Student Life, Marie has consistently gone above and beyond to enhance student experiences over her last five years here at Valley. For example, she works tirelessly with student clubs to ensure that they are supported. Her leadership in the SBVC Votes initiative was essential in increasing student voter engagement and empowering students to participate in the electoral process. These events have really improved student life, and she is always supportive of her student workers. Beyond her direct work with students, Marie is also an advocate for her colleagues. As the Creative Director of the API Association, Marie cultivates an inclusive and engaging community, using her creativity to foster cultural connection on campus, such as with the AMAZING work she did last year with API History Month. Plus, you all know THE shirts. They're stunning, and that was all Marie. Additionally, through the Participatory Governance Task Force, she represents classified professionals, working to ensure those voices are heard in institutional decision-making processes, and she represents classified professionals at the district level in the SBCCD HR Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee. And why are we at the max character limit now? Because Marie does A LOT for both her students and colleagues.

## *Ulavale Matavao, Counselor, First Year Experience*

I am honored to nominate Ula Matavao for the Outstanding Service Award. Ula has demonstrated exceptional dedication as a counselor, mentor, and collaborator at SBVC. His compassionate and equitable approach to supporting students stands out, and his unwavering commitment to fostering their success is evident in every aspect of his work. Ula not only provides valuable guidance but also builds strong, lasting relationships that empower students to reach their potential. His contributions extend beyond academic advising, as he continually works to improve the overall service and experience for the campus community. This nomination is a well-deserved recognition of Ula's tireless efforts, deep care for students, and his role in shaping the culture of excellence at SBVC.



## *Erik Morden, Food Service Supervisor, Food Service*

For years, Erik has been the "go-to man"! Year after year, he is there for all of us: faculty, staff, admin, and students! When you need to shine and make an event successful, Erik is the man! I have seen him bend budgets to help students, stay after hours to assist faculty, race around to help admin, and still have time to work directly with staff on many issues of concern. Perhaps more than any other employee on this campus, he serves us all- no exceptions. Because he is always behind the scenes making us and our campus shine, we seldom take the time to thank him for his amazing set of skills. Therefore, I would ask that we bestow upon Erik the great honor he deserves: the Outstanding Service Award! Thank you for everything over the years, Erik!

## *Maria Notarangelo, Librarian, Library*

Maria is an outstanding reference librarian whose dedication to student success goes beyond the library's walls. I've seen in-person how she provides exceptional research support, helping students navigate databases, refine search strategies, and develop confidence in their academic work. Her ability to make research approachable ensures that students of all backgrounds feel supported. I've seen firsthand how she's impacted students' lives and educational endeavors. Beyond one-on-one assistance, she actively collaborates with faculty to integrate library instruction into courses and participates in campus outreach events, bringing library services directly to students. Her commitment to accessibility, engagement, and student learning makes her an invaluable resource to our college community.

## *Debbie Orozco, Counselor, Counseling & Matriculation*

I enthusiastically nominate Debbie for the Outstanding Service Award. She exceeds her counseling duties by utilizing Spanish to communicate with parents and students, ensuring equitable access to information. She extends her support by visiting high schools, taking on overload to support students in the evenings and during Peak registration, and managing our counseling Instagram account. She contributes to the AB 928 taskforce by working on Starfish education plan drafts and providing input on catalog rights and CalGETC implementation. Debbie presented at last year's Counselor Conclave conference and continues to represent us annually in her CTE Liaison role. During our Annual Grad Fest event, she remained late to ensure every student received assistance and helped with cleanup—demonstrating her commitment extends beyond scheduled hours. Her dedication extends to committee work on Scholastic Standards and as a Student Services Senator in Academic Senate. These roles show her commitment to academic excellence and advocating for student needs. As a SBCCD Region 9 mentor, Debbie guides graduates in their master's program in counseling, increasing our diverse faculty applicant pool and creating an inclusive environment for students. Colleagues identify her office as a "go-to" safe space, reflecting the trust she has earned. Debbie's exceptional service, bilingual outreach, committee participation, and compassionate presence make her ideal for this award.

## *Isabel Shepard, Adjunct, Health Science/Nursing*

I am pleased to nominate Professor Shepard for the Outstanding Faculty Award. As a part-time faculty member, she consistently goes above and beyond in every aspect of her work. Professor Shepard is always willing to offer extra support to students, taking the time to understand their individual situations and providing guidance to help them succeed. Her dedication to student success is evident in the thoughtful accommodations and encouragement she offers, ensuring each student feels valued and supported. Additionally, she actively engages with her colleagues and contributes positively to

the academic community. Professor Shepard's commitment to excellence and her genuine care for students make her an invaluable member of our faculty.

### *Daniele Smith-Morton, Counselor, STEM/MESA*

Dr. Smith-Morton has demonstrated an unparalleled passion for education as her primary role in counseling. She mentors students and inspires them to be both "Active and Creative!" Her tireless efforts have not only transformed individual lives but have also strengthened our collective mission.

### *Teresa Weaver, Faculty, Science*

I am pleased to nominate Teresa Weaver for the Outstanding Faculty Award. She consistently demonstrates a kind and supportive demeanor, always being approachable and respectful to students, creating a welcoming and positive learning environment. Beyond student interactions, Prof. Weaver is always willing to assist other faculty members, even those in different departments, by offering guidance, sharing resources, and providing valuable insights. She is also dedicated to orienting new employees, offering mentorship and support to help them navigate the campus environment. Prof. Weaver is an exceptional asset to our academic community, and her contributions have had a lasting, positive impact on both students and faculty.

### *Vinnie Wu, Research Analyst, Research, Planning & Institutional Effectiveness*

Dr. Vinnie Wu is one of the most effective and dedicated individuals on our campus. She not only provides detailed, insightful research but also takes the time to clarify when data is misinterpreted or misunderstood, always educating our college community with patience and practicality. A fierce advocate for equity and inclusion, Dr. Wu deeply understands the challenges facing our students and employees, identifying where they are underserved and championing the support they need to thrive. We are incredibly fortunate to have her on our campus. Recently, Dr. Wu expanded her service by joining the Classified Senate and the Asian and Pacific Islander Association Executive Team, further demonstrating her commitment to advancing the needs of our community. Her dedication to our college is truly outstanding.

## Manager of the Year Award (Any SBVC Manager)

### *Lorrie Burnham, Dean, Science*

I am honored to nominate Dean Lorrie Burnham for the Manager of the Year Award. Dean Burnham consistently demonstrates a deep understanding of her responsibilities and leads with a clear sense of purpose and integrity. She always stands by the rules and ensures that the department operates smoothly and fairly. Her commitment to going above and beyond is evident as she takes the time to understand and address the concerns of her fellow employees, offering thoughtful solutions and being ready to work on fixing the problems and preventing them from happening again. Dean Burnham maintains the highest level of professionalism in all situations and is unafraid to offer constructive feedback when needed to ensure that the team is aligned and working efficiently. As faculty, we feel supported to bring out any ideas and concerns, and we can work without being retaliated for raising our concerns. Her leadership, dedication, and unwavering support make her an invaluable asset to the

institution.

## *Raymond Carlos, Dean, Student Engagement & Wellness*

Dr. Ray Carlos is an exemplary leader whose student-centered approach, dedication to staff support, and commitment to innovation make him a deserving recipient of the Manager of the Year award. As Dean of Student Engagement and Wellness, he oversees the Office of Student Life, Student Health Services, and Athletics with a clear focus on enhancing the student experience and fostering a campus environment where students can thrive. Dr. Carlos is deeply passionate about student success, continuously developing creative and innovative initiatives that promote engagement, well-being, and a sense of belonging. His leadership ensures that student services remain responsive to evolving needs, always prioritizing student growth and support. Beyond his impact on students, Dr. Carlos is an unwavering advocate for his teams. He fosters a supportive and collaborative work environment, ensuring that staff feel valued and empowered. He actively encourages career and educational growth, providing opportunities for professional development and mentorship that allow his team to advance in their careers. His ability to uplift and invest in those around him makes a profound difference in the lives of both students and staff. Through his vision, dedication, and persistence, Dr. Carlos has made a lasting impact on our campus. His student-centered leadership, commitment to staff development, and innovative spirit truly set him apart as an outstanding manager and leader.

## *Joanna Oxendine, Dean, Research, Planning, & Institutional Effectiveness*

Dr. Oxendine is by far the best manager in the district. She has completely transformed the research culture on campus, ensuring that data is thoughtfully analyzed and that all results are accessible, actionable, and put to good use. Through her leadership on the ASPIRE process, program review has become more dynamic, data-driven, and equity-centered. As a key leader of the Participatory Governance Taskforce, she has played a pivotal role in strengthening and reshaping shared governance structures, including faculty, staff, and administrators in institutional decision-making. Her ability to bridge research, equity, and governance has strengthened the college's commitment to student success and institutional excellence. Dr. Oxendine is also a dedicated mentor and team builder. Under her leadership, the research office has grown into an efficient, high-performing team known for its innovation and commitment to the college's mission. She actively supports staff members in expanding their skill sets and encourages them to take on leadership roles, both within the institution and in the broader research community.

## *Patricia Quach, Dean, Academic Success & Learning Services*

Nomination #1:

Patty's exceptional leadership and strategic vision have had a transformative impact on the Dual Enrollment program and the Middle College at our institution. Under Patty's guidance, the Dual Enrollment program has experienced remarkable growth, expanding over 400% in student participation. Her commitment to creating accessible, high-quality educational opportunities for high school students has strengthened partnerships with local K-12 districts, resulting in enhanced pathways for student success. A pivotal component of Patty's success lies in her ability to effectively manage resources and support her team. Patty's forward-thinking approach is evident in her strategic allocation of resources, ensuring that faculty, staff, and students receive the necessary tools and

support to excel. She has cultivated an environment of trust, innovation, and open communication, fostering collaboration across departments to maximize student success. Her contributions to the growth and sustainability of the Dual Enrollment program and the Middle College have set a standard of excellence that inspires all who work alongside her.

Patty Quach exemplifies the qualities of an outstanding leader—visionary, empathetic, and dedicated to the success of our students and institution.

#### Nomination #2:

The Academic Success & Learning Services Division has undergone profound changes over the last year, and our dean, Patty Quach, has led us through these changes with strong leadership, thoughtful decision-making, and consistent collaboration. Last year saw the retirement of the library director and two full-time librarians. Patty took over the director's responsibilities by working with staff members to keep the library running smoothly and providing support services to students, faculty, and staff. She understands the library's mission and desire to provide wraparound student support: she consults with staff and supports the work we do. In the Supplemental Instruction (SI) Program, Patty has been an exceptional leader and demonstrated unwavering commitment to supporting her staff, students, and faculty. Patty fosters a positive and inclusive environment, encouraging growth and collaboration, which has resulted in significant improvements to the program. Patty's exceptional leadership has had a transformative impact on the Dual Enrollment program and the Middle College. The program has experienced remarkable growth, expanding over 400% in student participation. Her commitment in creating accessible, high-quality educational opportunities for high school students has strengthened partnerships with local K-12 districts, resulting in enhanced pathways for student success. She is an outstanding leader.

### *Uvaldo Sifuentes, Director, Campus Technology Services*

Always makes time for classified staff, keeps the campus technology current, and is an exceptional manager who supports his staff and helps support the campus as a whole. With the help of his team, he put together the technology for the new career building so they could start in Spring.

### *Samuel Trejo, Director, Financial Aid*

Sam has demonstrated deep concern for assisting students by going above and beyond to find alternate ways to be able to successfully find a resolution to any students' concern. Also, he has proven to be a director that is also a team player, always making sure to stand behind his staff, especially when they are faced with adversities or unfair treatment from students.

## District Employee of the Year Award (Any District Office, TESS, KVCR, or EDCT Employee)

### *Joe Cabrales, District Dean, Educational and Student Support Services*

Joe exemplifies innovation, approachable leadership, and unwavering dedication to the success of SBVC. His ability to bring people together, foster collaboration, and drive meaningful progress has had a transformative impact on our institution.

Over the past year, Joe has been instrumental in expanding the adoption of key platforms such as

Starfish, Laserfiche, and Cranium Cafe all across SBVC, streamlining processes that enhance student support and operational efficiency. His forward-thinking approach ensures that technology is not just implemented but fully optimized to serve the needs of students, faculty, and staff alike. Joe is always willing to lend his expertise and provide feedback and guidance when called upon by so many of us all across the campus. His responsiveness and problem-solving mindset create a culture of support and teamwork that is truly inspiring. Joe Cabrales has set a new standard for collaboration and innovation within our district that has greatly influenced our campus' ability to make incredible progress in implementing technological solutions at SBVC throughout this past year. His contributions have not only strengthened our technological infrastructure but have also fostered a spirit of unity and progress that benefits everyone he works with.

### *Michele Jeannotte, Administrative Assistant II, Police*

Michele has always gone the extra mile for those that she is helping. She always has an answer to any problem you may have. Michele is the glue to our department.

### *Uvaldo "Aldo" Sifuentes, College Director of Technology Services, Campus Technology Services*

It is my pleasure to nominate Aldo Sifuentes as a way to recognize his exceptional efforts and commitment to San Bernardino Valley College. Aldo's commitment to the staff, faculty, and students of San Bernardino Valley College has been demonstrated in many ways. Some of the ways include his consistent presence in many meetings, leadership with the Technology Committee, constant pursuit of excellence in supporting the campus' technology needs, and participation in shared governance committees. A recent example is the efforts and leadership exemplified by Aldo with the shepherding of the Technology Plan through the collegial consultation process with campus-wide input. Aldo consistently provides input and guidance on the role of the technology team in the achievement of the campus mission, campus goals, and support of students.

## Honored Retiree Award (Any SBVC Retired Employee)

### *Yolanda Simental, Dean, Nursing*

Dean Yolanda is a great role model for the Nursing profession. While at Valley, she was a faculty member teaching Med-sur, and then she became the Dean for the nursing department, bringing our profession and nursing program to the next level. She introduced the simulation program to our students. Fixing all the old equipment first, then hiring a simulation manager and bringing new equipment simulations for our program. She makes sure instructors attend professional development to be up-to-date with new technology for our students' success. She hired teachers who were qualified and wanted to serve our student populations.

### *Dr. James Smith, Interim Vice President of Instruction , Office of Instructions*

Dr. James Smith has been an integral part of the San Bernardino Valley College community for over 24 years, showcasing exceptional dedication. Since January 2001, as the Dean of Research, Planning, and

Institutional Effectiveness, he has greatly influenced the college's academic landscape. His responsibilities include gathering and analyzing data to ensure compliance with federal, state, and district requirements while supporting strategic planning initiatives. By preparing and interpreting statistical reports, Dr. Smith empowers faculty and management to make informed decisions that enhance educational outcomes. In addition to his analytical role, he has initiated focus groups and questionnaires that foster a culture of continuous improvement at SBVC. His commitment to assessing institutional effectiveness ensures that the college remains responsive to the needs of students and the community. Dr. Smith's participation in the CalPass planning committee highlights his dedication to improving educational pathways and inter-institutional collaboration. He also served as the Interim Vice President of Instruction from October 2016 to January 2018, further demonstrating his leadership in academic excellence. Even post-retirement, Dr. Smith remains actively engaged with SBVC, underscoring his dedication to the college's mission and making him a deserving recipient of the SBVC Spotlight Award.