

# GED NEWSLETTER

**SPRING 2025**

*Happy Summer!*

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## CELEBRATING OUR

*Graduates!*

Our Continuing Education Staff is extremely proud of every one of our GED students for completing another semester!

May you continue to chase your dreams, embrace new challenges, and make a positive impact on the world. Your accomplishments are an inspiration to us all. Cheers to your bright and promising futures!



Continuing Education  
GED PROGRAM





# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Elias J Campos*

**SLO Student**



I want to get my GED to fully commit myself to higher education. My motivation is the hard work and sacrifice my parents and grandparents went through supporting me throughout school. If I had done it right the first time I should've earned my diploma 10 years ago but I like to think things happen for a reason and this was my time to complete it. The GED program has helped me gain the confidence I needed to take the GED

test. Before the help received from Mrs. Trejo, tutors and academic success advisors I viewed it as an insurmountable goal. With their support and the practice tests available through myged.com I was able to build myself confidence enough to take the next step. If all things go according to plan I would like to be enrolled full time at Cuesta College. My goal is to complete my general education at Cuesta while pursuing a bachelor's degree in business. "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." -Aesop

**Instructor Mary Trejo highlights:** "Elias Campos is an excellent student! He attends class weekly, arrives one hour before class for additional study, and works on Essential Ed at home during the week. He possesses great study habits, great discipline, and great determination. This is Elias' first semester studying GED. He has already passed the Official GED Math test and the Official GED Science test. He is currently scheduled to take the Official GED Social Studies test. Elias, You are a fantastic role model for other students!"

*Thomas Govea*

**SLO Student**



I want to get my GED because I want to get a better job and a better career. The thing that motivates me is just thinking to do better. The GED program helped me with the resources and support to get it done and it helped I didn't have to pay for the cost of it all. Hopefully in a year I'm a full time student and already going steady through my major in Engineering. I want to strive to do better so I can reach my goals and make my family proud the thing that motivates me is my family. "Through others we become ourselves." - Lev Vygotsky

**Instructor Mary Trejo highlights:** "Thomas Govea passes the GED tests with ease! This is his second semester in my GED class. During the first semester he wasn't able to put in many hours of study. However, this semester he puts in exactly the number of study hours he needs through Essential Ed and is very quick to understand and learn the subject matter. This semester he has passed the Official GED Math test and Official GED Science. He is scheduled to take the Official GED Social Studies test. He is an example of "if you put in the time, effort, and focus, you will succeed quickly".

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Jo Becchio*

Online Student



Having not finished my high school education, I was proud to see that my three children attended college. I felt it was time for me to continue my education. I also felt the need to keep my brain active and exercise it. I wanted to learn new things. Having Mr. Parke as my teacher, he inspired me by telling me that I am doing good and sees improvements in my studies.

There have been many times I have wanted to throw the math book out the window. I pause reopen the book, then start again and I solve the problem. The happiness I get when I know I truly understand what I just did is so amazing. I tend to look at life a little different after learning all about science and how the world works, I have a greater appreciation for life itself. I've also been able to stick to a schedule better. My writing has improved. A lot of little things have had a greater effect on me and my daily life. Having a purpose, goals, and accomplishing them can only better one's self. I have still a lot to learn. I'm ready for it. A year from now I believe I'll have my GED certificate and come back to Cuesta College take Art classes to improve my drawing and paint a portrait of the ocean with a transparent wave breaking and enter it in the Mid Sate Fair. You are never too old and it's never too late to keep on learning, I'm 68.

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**Instructor Parke Godar highlights:** "It has been a pleasure to work with Jo over the past year and to watch her accelerate toward the completion of her GED. After finishing the science portion of the test earlier this year, she turned her focus to math. Her disciplined approach has her on the cusp of passing that test in the next week or two and the final subjects in late spring or early summer. Jo is a gifted story-teller, an accomplished artist, and a catalyst in the classroom. Congratulations, Jo. And thanks for all your hard work and good company!"

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*Maria del Rosario Jimenez*

Online Student



The reasons why I want to complete the GED course are to continue my academic education and be able to graduate from high school in this country. This online course has been a great help, especially because I don't have to leave home and I can still take care of my children, which is very important to me. The teachers are also very good, and their classes are very interesting. They look for ways to help each student in their educational journey, which I really appreciate. Next year, I see myself already taking college classes to continue with my educational goals and reach my objective.

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**Instructor Leif Hanson highlights:** "She is a hard worker and has already passed several Essential Education practice exams. I anticipate that she will pass others and make huge strides very soon toward earning her diploma."



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

*Paulina Ortiz*

**NCC Student**



While living in Mexico, I received a Bachelor's degree in Accounting. Upon arriving in this country, I began taking ESL classes, and it was there that I discovered the opportunity to enter the GED program, and learned about the Cuesta Promise. The GED program opened my eyes to a world of opportunities that we often don't imagine as immigrants. Today, I have a clear goal to continue my studies, thanks to the support of the Cuesta Promise. I visualize myself next year completing my first year as an Accounting Clerk at Cuesta College, advancing towards better professional preparation. To those studying today, I would say that although returning to the classroom after several years can be challenging, especially when you're working, and in the case of many women, also raising children, anything is possible with perseverance and discipline. In the end, knowledge is an invaluable reward.

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*Juan Lopez*

**NCC Student**



My priority is to get a GED certificate because it opens up better opportunities, such as getting a better job, earning more money, and pursuing a career. It also helps you gain knowledge about different things you didn't know existed or that interest and motivate you. The GED program inspired me to pursue a career in viticulture. By learning about science, I realized how much nature gives us and how little we appreciate it. This motivated me to learn more about plants and science. I'm now taking viticulture classes at Cuesta, and I'm really enjoying them. The GED has helped me learn many things and broaden my perspective. In a year, I see myself working as an assistant vineyard manager, working with plants and collaborating with vineyard and winery owners. I encourage everyone to take the GED program, regardless of their age, because it's never too late to start. Don't focus on negative comments—think about your future. Don't hesitate to come to Cuesta and learn about the resources they offer at the Student Success Center with Jasmin Lopez and Gladis Villalpando.

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*Sandra Avalos*

**NCC Student**



My reason for studying the GED is because I only completed high school in Mexico, and I would have liked to continued studying. I enrolled in Cuesta College's ESL classes in 2020, and the pandemic also hit at that time. I didn't know that Cuesta College offered so much help to immigrants. During the pandemic, I discovered that they offered ESL, GED, and many other classes. I am grateful for all the help I have received. I am grateful for all the help I have received. The GED has helped me to believe in myself once again, and to realize that age doesn't matter when it comes to pursuing your dreams. Next year, I'll be enrolled in Business classes at Cuesta. I would tell my classmates not to give up, nothing is easy, and every effort has it's rewards. I also want to thank my teacher, Minerva Soto for all her support, dedication, and help.

# MEET THE INSTRUCTORS

LEIF HANSON



My name is Leif Hanson and I live in Morro Bay with my wife and family. I have taught a variety of subjects, but primarily high school Spanish, for over 20 years. I currently teach high school Spanish at San Luis Obispo High and I am excited to teach the GED Preparation course at Cuesta Community College to help students earn their GED. I enjoy surfing and going to the beach with my family.

MINERVA SOTO



I am from Oaxaca, Mexico. I moved to the USA when I was 17. I graduated from Cuesta College in 2006 (AS) and got my BA from Columbia College. I earned my MA in Education from Fresno State. Love teaching my ESL and GED classes. I was a student at Cuesta College, then I was a tutor and teacher's aide. I finally became a teacher in 2014 and have worked as an instructor at Cuesta since then. I enjoy food and movies.

MARY TREJO



My full-time career has been in Business/Management positions. However, teaching is my passion and I have taught as adjunct faculty since 1981. Volunteering is my favorite hobby! I have done volunteer teaching for a GED program for the Fresno Rescue Mission and now teach Bible lessons on a volunteer basis in Grover Beach at an elementary school. I have been retired for three years here on the Central Coast and love spending time walking with my husband and my dog on the beach every morning!

PARKE GODAR



Parke has a background in Natural Resources, Botany, and Environmental Law. He has taught outdoor education in California, Washington, and Utah. He currently works with adult learners who are reentering their formal education pathways. In his free time, he enjoys reading, hiking, biking, yoga, and disc golf.

# STUDENT SUCCESS CENTERS

**FREE Tutoring via  
ZOOM and  
In-Person**

**Drop in and  
One-on-One  
Appointments**

**Spanish-speaking  
tutors available**

**Check each tutors'  
availability on  
CANVAS**

**Are you struggling to learn a GED subject?**

**Get FREE one-on-one help with  
any GED subject to help you  
prepare for the exams!**

Including: Math, Science, Social Studies, RLA

**SLO Campus  
Room 3300/3400  
805-546-3150**

**North County Campus  
Room N3130B  
805-591-6245**

**We Also Offer:**

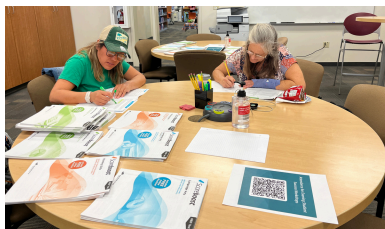
**FREE Snacks and  
Coffee!**

**Student Success  
Workshops**

**Study Area**

**FREE Study  
Supplies**

**Zen Zone to  
relax**



## GED TUTORS



**Parke Godar**  
*GED Instructor*

If you need extra help with any GED subject, visit Instructor Parke in the Student Success Centers on both SLO and NCC campuses.

## STUDENT SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

Do you feel like you don't have enough time?

Do you want to make studying more enjoyable and effective?

Do you need to improve your memory?

Do you feel stressed?

If you  
answered



Attend one of  
our workshops!

Offered at the Student Success Centers in SLO and NCC campuses and virtually through Zoom.

### What students are saying:

- I learned to exercise, journal, meditate and walk to lower my stress.
- I learned how to prioritize and organize my responsibilities to plan my day to day
- I identified my learning style and how to combat obstacles to studying



**Hilda Rivera**  
*GED Graduate*

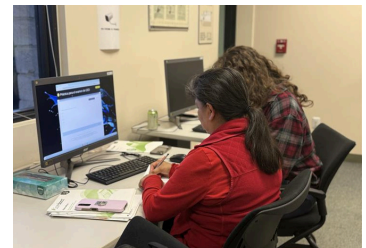
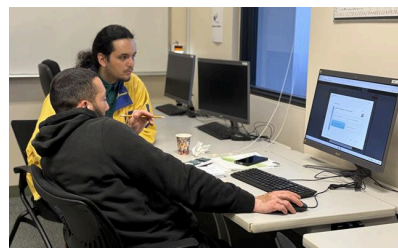
Hilda completed the GED program and now helps Spanish speaking GED students in the NCC Student Success Center.



# TACOS AND TUTORING

Our first "Tacos and Tutoring" event was a success! Students had the opportunity to gain support from tutors, obtain additional study materials, and enjoy free tacos! It was a great way for students to build a sense of community on campus.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended, including our tutors, GED instructors Mary Trejo, Parke Godar, Minerva Soto, and our department coordinator Jose Real Galaviz!



## DO YOU NEED HELP PAYING FOR BASIC NECESSITIES?

THE CUESTA COLLEGE BASIC NEEDS CENTER CAN HELP YOU!



RENT/BILLS



GROCERIES



GAS MONEY

### WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

- 1** Schedule an appointment with Jasmin Lopez (Academic Success Coach) to complete the online application form
- 2** Complete the online application form
- 3** Schedule an appointment with Jack DePuy from the **Basic Needs Center** through Cuesta Connect to receive resources

**\*You can apply up two times during each Fall and Spring Semester**

Scan the code to access the application form. You will need your Mycuesta username and password



## MONARCH DREAM CENTER



### Services & Support

- ❑ **FREE** Immigration Legal Services
- ❑ A safe & inclusive environment
- ❑ Bilingual Staff
- ❑ Support
  - Accessing legal services
  - Accessing financial aid and scholarships
  - Connecting with on and off campus resources
  - etc

### Visit Us

**San Luis Obispo**  
Affinity Programs Center  
Building 3200  
Mon. 8:00 am – 6:00 pm  
Wed. 8:00 am – 6:00 pm  
Fri. 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

**Paso Robles**  
Building N1100 | Room N1123  
Tue. & Thurs. 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

### Contact Us

Email  
[monarch@cuesta.edu](mailto:monarch@cuesta.edu)

Phone Number  
**SLO & NCC**  
(805) 546-3109

**Book an Appointment**



# PREPARING FOR YOUR NEXT STEPS

Whether you recently obtained your GED certificate or are close to completion, it is important to start planning your next steps.

As a GED graduate, you may be eligible for the Cuesta Promise, a scholarship program that will pay for any fees during your first year enrolled in credit courses.

Complete these steps before August 1st, 2025 to receive the **Cuesta Promise**:

- 1 **CHECK RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION**  
(The Cuesta Promise will pay fees for students that are a California Resident or AB540 student)
  - 2 **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION**
  - 3 **FAFSA/DREAM ACT APPLICATION**
  - 4 **CUESTA ONLINE ORIENTATION**
  - 5 **UPDATE MAJOR IN CUESTA PORTAL**
  - 6 **REGISTER FOR CLASSES**  
Meet with an academic counselor and register for classes
- Meet with an Academic Success Coach for help with any of these steps.



- 1 Research and choose the top programs/certificates you are interested in
- 2 Consult with an Academic Success Coach
- 3 Make an appointment with an Academic Counselor to create a plan
- 4 Find out if you are eligible for the Cuesta Promise

Scan the QR code to browse all the certificates and degrees we offer at Cuesta College!



Apply now  
for the Fall  
Semester!

## Transitions Grant

This grant is intended to support ESL and GED noncredit students who wish to transition to credit classes but need financial support and do not qualify for financial aid.

### HOW TO APPLY

- ✓ Meet with an Academic Success Coach to explore certificates
- ✓ Fill out the online Transitions Grant application:  
Click this link: <https://forms.gle/kCkfoGeepBwY4S1w8> or scan the QR code to apply
- ✓ Meet with an Academic Success Coach twice throughout the semester for academic support
- ✓ Provide feedback at the end of the semester



**Benefits:** ✓ Financial Support ✓ Academic Support

**These FREE classes can help you build the skills and knowledge to be successful in credit courses:**

### CSS 125 - College Learning Strategies

Helps you learn study skills that promote college success and lifelong learning

### CSS 754 - Major and Career Exploration

Helps you select a fulfilling career path and create an educational plan based on your personal values, interests and abilities

### CSS 789 - Reading and Writing

Helps you develop essential reading and writing skills necessary to succeed in English and writing intensive courses.

### CSS 725 - College Success Studies

Integrates personal growth and values, academic study strategies, and critical and creative thinking proficiency to become a successful college student.

**You can enroll in these classes during the Summer, Fall or Spring semesters**



# ACADEMIC SUCCESS COACHES

We are here to answer your questions and concerns, teach you study strategies, and connect you to resources that can eliminate barriers and help you transition into credit courses.



**JASMIN LOPEZ**

## **WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!**

We are available to meet in person or virtually



**CRYSTAL URBANO**

📍 North County Campus,  
Student Success Center (N3130B)  
☎ (805) 592-9446  
✉ jasmin\_lopez1@cuesta.edu

📍 San Luis Obispo Campus,  
Student Success Center (3323)  
☎ (805) 592-9944  
✉ crystal\_urbano@cuesta.edu

Scan this QR code to  
schedule an  
appointment with  
Jasmin



Scan this QR code to  
schedule an  
appointment with  
Crystal



**Make an appointment with us if you need help with any of the following:**

- Feeling overwhelmed and need to create a plan to finish your GED
- Need money for gas, food, and other basic necessities
- Finished GED and need help exploring certificates and planning next steps
- Need help studying and managing time
- Want to learn about financial aid opportunities and resources on campus
- Need help completing steps to receive the Cuesta Promise
- Need someone to keep you accountable



# Summer

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### SLO CAMPUS:

#### **BSNC 501:**

Math & Science  
Tues/Wed/Thurs  
6-8:50pm  
Mary Trejo

### **ATTENTION!**

Are you registered for next semester?  
Make sure to complete the CASAS  
Post-Test to be cleared to register for  
the Spring Semester!

### ONLINE:

#### **BSNC 501:**

Math & Science  
Tues/Weds/Thurs  
6-8:50pm  
Minerva Soto  
**(In Spanish)**

#### **BSNC 502:**

Language Arts & Social Studies  
Tues/Wed/Thurs  
6-8:50pm  
Leif Hanson  
**(In Spanish)**

# Fall

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### SLO CAMPUS:

#### **BSNC 501:**

Math & Science  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
6-7:20pm  
Mary Trejo

### NORTH COUNTY CAMPUS:

#### **BSNC 501:**

Math & Science  
Tuesdays 6-8:50pm  
Minerva Soto  
**(In Spanish)**

### ONLINE:

#### **BSNC 501:**

Math & Science  
Tuesdays 6-8:50pm  
Parke Godar

#### **BSNC 501:**

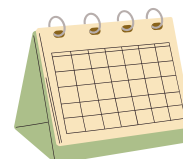
Math & Science  
Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
6-8:50pm  
(8/11-10/10)  
Leif Hanson  
**(In Spanish)**

#### **BSNC 502:**

Language Arts & Social  
Studies  
Tuesdays & Wednesdays  
6-8:50pm  
(10/15-12/12)  
Leif Hanson  
**(In Spanish)**

#### **BSNC 500A/B:**

Language Arts & Social Studies  
Thursdays 6-7:50pm  
Minerva Soto  
**(In Spanish)**





*Congratulations*

**2024-2025  
GED GRADUATES**



**Paulina Ortiz  
Sandra Avalos  
Samantha Marquez  
Julieta Stallman  
Jamie Sanders  
Maria Esther Cardenas  
Azael Becerril  
Karla Garcia Ramirez  
Libertad Cortina  
Benjamin Reinhardt  
Marlene Ruiz  
Silvano Vazquez Hernandez**

