

COLLEGE HISTORY

The original junior/community college in San Luis Obispo County was initiated as a postgraduate division of San Luis Obispo High School in 1916 and remained in operation until the United States entered into World War I. In 1936, the San Luis Obispo High School District again formed a junior college, which remained in operation until June 1959.

On April 16, 1963, San Luis Obispo County voters approved the formation of a countywide junior college district, serving seven public high school districts. The newly-formed San Luis Obispo County Junior College District served the Arroyo Grande Union High School District, Atascadero Union High School District, Coast Joint Union High School District, Paso Robles Joint Union High School District, San Luis Obispo Union High School District, Shandon Joint Union School District and Templeton Union High School District.

During the 1964-65 college year, the San Luis Obispo County Junior College District offered a limited evening division program with 463 students registering for the fall semester and 696 enrolling for the spring semester. Temporary quarters were established at Camp San Luis Obispo, a California National Guard facility located halfway between San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay. Classes and offices were situated in refurbished barracks, recreation rooms, and mess halls.

Despite the District's modest beginnings, 917 day students and 991 evening students were enrolled in classes by the fall of 1965. Evening division classes also were conducted at three other locations in the county - Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, and Paso Robles. On October 4, 1965, the Board of Trustees of the San Luis Obispo County Junior College District named the new college "Cuesta College." In 1971, the "junior" college district was renamed to "community college."

In 1970, ground was broken for the college's first permanent buildings, located on the 150-acre campus west of Camp San Luis Obispo. During the following 40 years, classroom buildings, a library, observatory, student center, art and music lab building, art gallery, high tech learning center, children's center, performing arts center, and office spaces were constructed on the San Luis Obispo Campus. In the fall of 2016, approximately 7,012 students were served on the San Luis Obispo Campus.

In the fall of 1998, the District opened the North County Campus on a 105-acre site in Paso Robles. The campus, built almost exclusively with private gift support, has grown from 1,200 students the first semester to 3,071 students in fall 2016. In the summer of 2005, the first permanent building opened to students: The Fox Family Building. This building houses Allied Health, Math, and Science. The college broke ground for a second permanent building in spring 2010: The North County Campus Learning Resource Center. The Learning Resource Center was completed in fall 2011 and began serving students in spring 2012. The building was named in honor of donors Dale and Mary Schwartz and dedicated on May 24, 2012.

The South County Center is an off-campus evening instructional site at Arroyo Grande High School, provided in cooperation with the Lucia Mar Unified School District. During the fall 2016 semester, 808 students were served at this site. In the spring of 2016, the college brought back its free Emeritus College non-credit courses for adults, providing a free source for lifelong learning, vocational education, and cultural development for adult community members.

In 2013, Cuesta College rolled out the Cuesta College Promise, a scholarship that today provides all newly graduated San Luis Obispo County

high school students a fee-free first year (consecutive fall and spring semesters). In fall 2016, more than 700 local students entered Cuesta College on the Promise Scholarship. In 2016, Cuesta College launched the Cambria Promise, providing a fee-free second year to all Coast Unified School District high school grads. With the proven success of the Cambria Promise, the college recently announced efforts to add a second year of fee-free education to the Promise Scholarship.

On November 4, 2014, the voters of San Luis Obispo County passed Measure L, a \$275 million general obligation bond to improve Cuesta College. Measure L addresses longstanding facility, infrastructure and technology needs. The first two bond-funded buildings (the San Luis Obispo Campus Instructional Building and the North County Campus Center) will be completed in fall 2017 and begin serving students in spring 2018.

Cuesta College maintains various official designations, including as a Hispanic Serving Institution, allowing the college to apply for grants that expand educational opportunities for Latino/a students, and as a Military Friendly® School, recognizing the college's efforts to support military students.

College Mission

Cuesta College is an inclusive institution that inspires a diverse student population to achieve their educational goals.

We effectively support students in their efforts to improve foundational skills, earn certificates or associate degrees, transfer to four-year institutions, and advance in the work-force.

Through innovative and challenging learning opportunities, Cuesta College enhances lives by promoting cultural, intellectual, personal, and professional growth. We prepare students to become engaged citizens in our increasingly complex communities and world.

Vision

Cuesta College is dedicated to accessible, high-quality education for the support and enhancement of student success, professional development, and the community we serve.

Values

Access - Success - Excellence

San Luis Obispo County Community College District Code of Ethics

The commitment of faculty, staff, and students to ethical conduct that recognizes the value and dignity of each individual informs the mission, vision, and values of the San Luis Obispo County Community College District/Cuesta College. Faculty and staff are also guided by the standards and principles established by their respective professional associations and organizations. All employees and Board members are expected to uphold rules of conduct defined and established by federal and state law and exhibit behavior that promotes the following principles:

Integrity: To demonstrate professional trustworthiness and resist pressures to deviate from professional ethical behavior.

Civility: To ensure an honest and supportive climate that promotes the mission of the institution; accept and recognize the benefit of dissenting viewpoints, and recognize that civil behavior is both an individual and a collective responsibility.