

OPPORTUNITY

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NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

San Jac names new vice chancellor of fiscal affairs

Carin Hutchins recently was named the vice chancellor of fiscal affairs for San Jacinto College. Hutchins joined the College in 2020 as associate vice chancellor of finance. In this role, she oversaw the comptroller's office, student financial services, financial planning, analysis and budget, and the district records management office.

As the vice chancellor, Hutchins will lead several College departments, including facilities services, contracts and purchasing, auxiliary services, internal audit, safety, health and risk management, budgets, accounting and financial services, comptroller, office of grants management, office of emergency management, and the police department. She will also serve in an advisory board role with the San



Jacinto College Foundation.

Hutchins began her career in public accounting working for Deloitte and Touche. She worked as assistant controller for the Lower Colorado River Authority in Austin and was later promoted to controller. Since that time, Hutchins has held positions with large community colleges. She holds a master's in business administration from the University of Texas and is a certified public accountant.

Logistics bachelor's degree coming in spring 2026

The greater Houston area, a hub for global trade and transportation, needs more degreed professionals who can navigate complex modern supply chains. Join this booming industry thanks to San Jacinto College's newest bachelor's degree, coming in spring 2026.

The Bachelor of Applied Technology in logistics and supply chain management will provide an affordable, high-quality pathway into one of the nation's fastest-growing industries. Classes will be available 100% online.

With the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projecting a 19% growth in logistics jobs by 2033, the demand for skilled professionals continues to rise. The degree trains students for jobs in transportation, logistics, and supply chain management.

According to texaswages.com, logisticians in the Gulf Coast area earn a median salary of \$72,157 a year.

"San Jacinto College aims to drive economic growth by transforming

lives through education," said Shelley Rinehart, assistant vice chancellor for instructional and support program efficacy. "Our goal is to improve our students' economic and social mobility, creating a lasting legacy for future generations."

San Jac also offers bachelor's degrees in nursing, cybersecurity, and education. Scan the QR code to learn more.



Children's center earns re-accreditation

The San Jacinto College Central Campus Children's Center has earned re-accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, achieving an exceptional 91.96% pass rate. The accreditation is valid through

February 2030.

The center is one of only four facilities in the Deer Park, La Porte, and Pasadena area accredited by the association. With more than 30 years of experience, the National Association for the Education of Young Children is the nation's leading organization in early childhood education accreditation, setting comprehensive standards for program quality, professional practices, and operational excellence.

This accreditation is widely recognized as the gold standard for early childhood education programs, representing a commitment to operational excellence and high-quality care.

The center, which has served the community for over 20 years, underwent a comprehensive evaluation process including classroom observations and portfolio reviews.

The re-accreditation process began immediately following the previous accreditation in September 2019.



Photos by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

LIFELONG LEARNER RETURNS TO CLASSROOM AFTER 40 YEARS

By Neesha Hosein
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

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

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

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

"I had no idea there was something like 30,000 students, five campuses, more than 200 degrees and certifications, and the recurring Aspen

Award consideration," he said. "Following that luncheon, I decided I wanted to contribute to San Jac's ongoing success."

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

The Raven Life

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

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

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

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

"They were polite, helpful, and extremely generous with their time," he said. "I imagine they looked at me and figured someone my age needed all the help they could offer. Most ended our encounter by asking what class I was teaching.

I got a good laugh at their expressions when I told them I was a first-year student. I'm probably 50 years older than most of my classmates."

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

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

The two have managed to learn from each other.

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

Future plans

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

He works with the Armand Bayou Nature Center Foundation, Exploration Green Conservancy, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Project, Galveston Bay Foundation,

and Port Houston Commission Community Advisory Council, all in addition to serving as a board member with the San Jacinto College Foundation.

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



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

| DATE | EVENT | TIME | SITE |
|--------|-----------------------|--------|---|
| May 8 | Wind Ensemble Concert | 7 p.m. | Central Campus, Corbin Hall, Monte Blue Music Building (C5.151) |
| May 16 | Spring commencement | 7 p.m. | NRG Stadium |
| May 26 | Memorial Day | Closed | All campuses and online |
| June 2 | Summer classes begin | Varies | All campuses and online |

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit sanjac.edu/calendar.

SAN JAC PREPARES FOR NEW VIRTUAL CAMPUS LAUNCH

By **Neesha Hosein**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College Online, the College's newest campus, will launch in fall 2025.

The virtual campus represents a major shift in how the College will support online students, offering a streamlined, consistent learning experience across all virtual courses.

"Initially, the College explored launching the virtual campus in a single phase," Dr. Ken Tidwell, chief officer for online learning, said. "However, following an almost two-year internal study of student enrollment trends and initial launch planning in summer 2024, it became clear that the scale of change required more planning and preparation."

A separate work group made up of instructional leaders, faculty, staff, and district-wide administrators explored additional plans for launch. Ultimately, the group recommended a phased approach rather than a one-time launch plan to the College's Strategic Leadership Team. As a result, the College adopted the phased approach to the launch.

New approach improves efficiency

With the new phased plan, the initial launch timeline remains unchanged, and the College will offer 60 certificates and degrees fully online.

The plan aims to improve the

student experience significantly, addressing several common challenges that current online students face. One of the issues Tidwell cited was that many online students are unsure which campus their courses are offered through or whom to contact for assistance. This can lead to confusion and unnecessary delays.

"We had a situation this past term when a student didn't realize that they accidentally enrolled in an 8-week course," Tidwell said. "After realizing it, the student tried to get help at the campus they were familiar with but was told to contact another campus. When calling, they got voicemail. Eventually, the student was routed to San Jac Online, but by then, a lot of time and energy had been wasted. Going to San Jac Online first would have resulted in a more seamless experience."

After its full implementation across all phases, San Jac Online will provide a single point of contact for students and College staff, allowing them to get the guidance they need faster without being bounced between multiple campuses.

Course options

A key aspect of the virtual campus will be consistency in online course offerings. All sections of a particular online course will feature aligned textbooks and a consistent basic course design. Tidwell explained

this will allow students to focus on learning the material rather than struggling to navigate different course set-ups.

"From an academic standpoint, one of the goals of the new campus is to ensure that all sections of a specific online course title have an aligned textbook and a consistent learning management system course design, combining the strengths of our faculty expertise with the best practices in instructional design," Tidwell said. "Research has shown these positively impact online learner success at the course level."

Achieving the goals

One goal of San Jac Online is

to simplify the process.

Students enrolled online may also take on-campus courses, giving them flexibility in how they learn.

For Tidwell, the most important goal of San Jac Online is clear — student success.

"Our goal in launching San Jac Online is to ensure the College strategically and operationally supports our faculty and staff who are working daily to meet the needs of students choosing online learning to achieve their goals," he said.

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac Online.



RAISING UP 'MEN OF HONOR' BEHIND BARS

By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

"Men of honor, where are you?" Diane Pinkney's voice echoes through the intermediate sanctions facility dorm.

The inmates rise: "Here I am."
"What makes you a man of honor?" Pinkney asks.

"Because my old ways are not my ways today."

Many of these men thought change was impossible. Today, they believe.

Voice for voiceless

In the 1980s, Pinkney didn't expect to find her voice — or to become anyone else's — when she enrolled at San Jacinto College.

"The public service administration program paved the way for me to get out there and express views on things that people were not able to advocate for themselves, like the homeless," she said.

She not only mustered courage to speak up but also engaged with homeless people, trying to understand why they were in their situation. Though she saw the link to mental health problems and drug addiction, she couldn't "quite put all the pieces together."

Birth of mission

In 2005, Pinkney started Make Over In Christ to help people struggling with homelessness and substance abuse. For a decade, she ran this nonprofit while juggling multiple jobs.

Wanting to learn more, she enrolled in

San Jac's mental health studies program in 2017.

"Everything my professors said to me was like hitting the nail on the head," Pinkney said.

Meanwhile, she applied her learning outside the classroom. Driving a school bus, she taught kids why, not just how, to say no to drugs. She also rescued her cousin from a crack house, despite others telling her not to save those who "didn't want to be saved."

"As I began to understand the homeless, my cousin, and the information from my professors, it all made sense to me how to help people," she said.

Behind bars

After completing her associate degree, Pinkney still needed treatment hours to become a licensed chemical dependency counselor, so she applied with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Today, she works as a counselor intern at Houston's Joe Kegans Intermediate Sanctions Facility. In this "second-chance program," clients complete up to 90 days in a cognitive or substance abuse program.

Crimes range from burglary to murder, but Pinkney doesn't judge.

"They've served their time," she said. "My job is to teach them how not to repeat that behavior."

She leads group and one-on-one sessions behind bars, challenging clients' thinking through inspirational movies and other resources. There's also the "power of the pause" — staying quiet so a client can share his own story with his peers.

Men of honor

Kegans clients have four daily guarantees: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and the Kegans creed.

Pinkney asks each to recite the creed with conviction, especially the line "I believe in myself." Though they enter as men of dishonor, they can leave as men of honor.

To demonstrate each person's dignity, she asked a client with schizophrenia, mumbling in the corner, to come forward. He marched up front, opened his mouth, and out poured wisdom.

"Never," she told the other clients, "discount the person sitting next to you."

Breakthroughs happen, but just as quickly, the room can change. When one client cussed her out, the others jumped to defend her.

"It made me realize anything could break loose," she said. "Even though I don't fear for my life, we have a lot of clients who are in dire need of psychological help."

Her advice to others interested in the mental health field?

"Some days you may feel like you're not doing anything — it's not paying off," she said. "And some days you're gonna feel like you're on top of the mountain. But keep moving."

Change ahead

The moment Pinkney "hits the floors" at Kegans — 6 a.m. — her yawn switches to laser-focus.

"It's like I just had a strong cup of coffee," she said. "My mind is made up that... somebody's life is going to change." No matter what the future holds, Pinkney knows her purpose today.

"Somebody's waiting on a change," she said. "And they need to hear about it."

Scan the QR code to learn more about mental health and addiction studies.



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College



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SEIZING OPPORTUNITY: LABBE HARNESSSES POWER OF NETWORKING AND MENTORSHIP

By **Melissa Trevizo**
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Networking isn't just about shaking hands and exchanging business cards. It's about building meaningful relationships that shape careers and open doors to opportunities.

For Zach Labbe, San Jacinto College process technology student, networking has propelled his academic and professional growth.

During his junior year as a Clear Brook High School dual credit student, Labbe struggled to determine his career path. Though he had been considering the medical field, a conversation with his school counselor introduced him to process technology and the opportunities in the chemical industry. Her guidance — combined with the cutting-edge facilities and high-quality training at San Jac's LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology, along with the opportunity to earn six figures — solidified his decision to enroll.

"I wanted to do something meaningful and secure my future," Labbe said. "The chance to gain hands-on experience in state-of-the-art facilities, such as the

glycol processing plant, convinced me that San Jac was the right choice."

Labbe immersed himself in the college community, joining the process technology club, where he now serves as the vice president. This role expanded his network and introduced him to mentors like Andre Johnson, the club's president, and fellow student Stuart Prall. Both have mentored Labbe and helped him excel. His academic dedication has also paid off, as he recently made the dean's list for his outstanding grades.

Labbe's active participation showcased his potential to influential figures like Jeff Pearce, CPET education and workforce coordinator. Pearce connected him to plant tours and exclusive networking events.

"We were settling logistics for the Texas Chemistry Alliance hospitality tent for the Pasadena Rodeo last year when Zach was roped in to help load something into my truck," Pearce said. "He asked if he could help that evening. After that, he volunteered each night, and I could see him talking with different industry members throughout the evening. He learned that weekend that

volunteering will get you some face time with the people that will eventually hire you, and he constantly looks for more opportunities to engage."

Labbe encourages students to build meaningful connections with their peers outside the classroom.

"I was just going to class and heading home before," he said. "But getting involved in the community and participating in events changed everything. It's been a huge confidence booster."

According to Pearce, Dow Chemical has Labbe on its radar as a potential apprentice because of his strong engagement. During a plant tour, Dow leaders encouraged Labbe to apply for the

prestigious Dow apprenticeship program and personally follow up.

"Being engaged and present made the difference. It wasn't just my resume; it was my face and my story," he explained.

For Labbe, networking is more than a skill — it's a pathway to success, enriching his education and future.

"You never know who can open a door for you," he said. "And sometimes all it takes is a single conversation."

Scan the QR code to learn more about process technology.

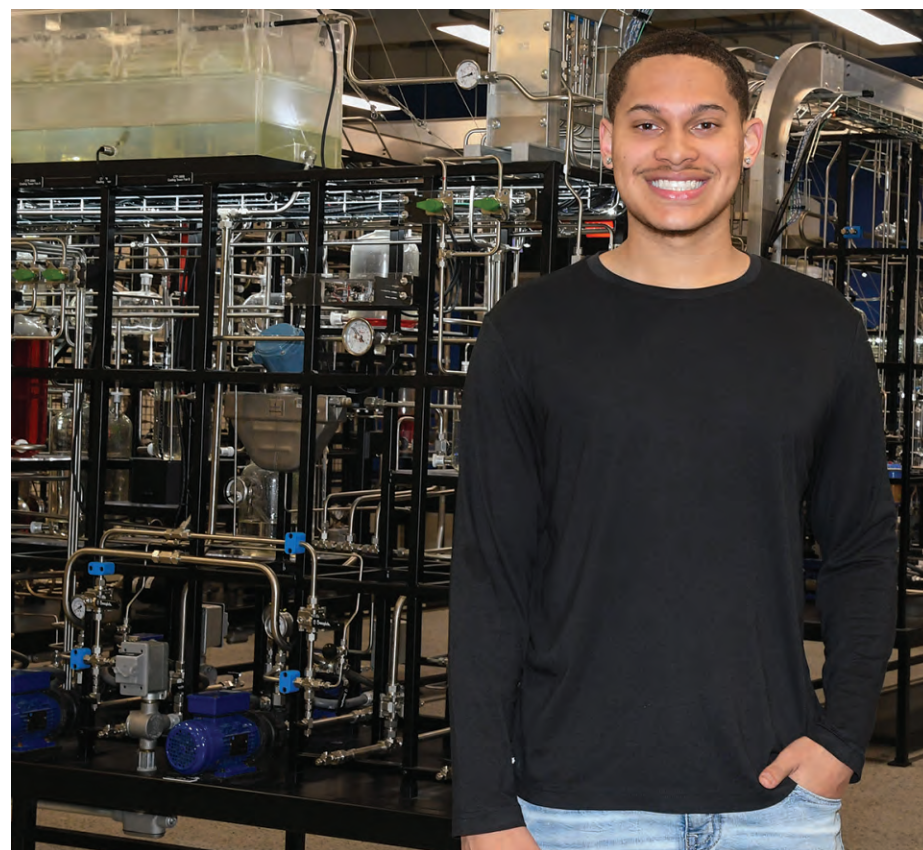
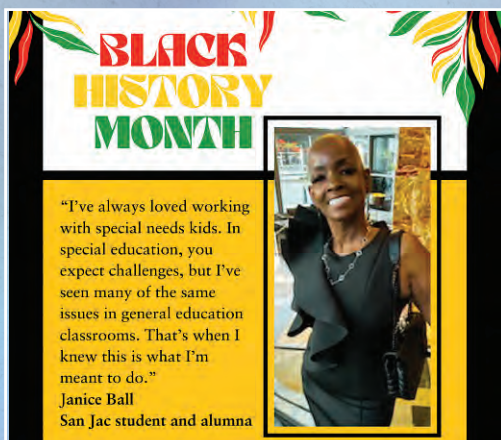


Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

Lessons in Networking

- **Be Proactive:** Whether through clubs, events, or casual conversations, actively engage with others.
- **Value Every Connection:** Relationships with peers, instructors, and professionals can lead to unexpected opportunities.
- **Show Initiative:** Employers and mentors value students who step forward, demonstrating interest and effort.
- **Pay It Forward:** Building a network isn't just about personal gain. Create opportunities for others.



Facebook

Meet Janice Ball! A former police officer turned paraprofessional, she found her passion in helping students with special needs. Now, she's on track to graduate in May 2025 with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Education. Your journey can transform too!



22 reactions | 2 comments | 2,717 impressions | 305 engagements

POE-ENTINE'S DAY CARDS

SIGN THESE CARDS AND CUT THEM OUT.



Instagram

Poe's First-Ever Poe-entine's Day Cards Are Here! Hey, Ravens! It's Poe here, and I've got something special for you this Valentine's Day—Poe-entine's Day Cards to share with your friends, family, or someone you like!



165 likes | 2,755 impressions | 197 engagements



LinkedIn

During a Random Acts of Kindness Day celebration at the South Campus, students, faculty, and staff wrote greeting cards to cancer patients ages 18-30. All cards will be sent to the Dear Jack Foundation for nationwide distribution. This event is hosted by the Department of English, Modern Languages, and Speech.



28 reactions | 102 clicks | 1,889 impressions | 131 engagements

YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



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5800 Uvalde Rd., Houston, TX 77049

CENTRAL CAMPUS

8060 Spencer Hwy., Pasadena, TX 77505

SOUTH CAMPUS

13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, TX 77089

MARITIME CAMPUS

3700 Old Hwy. 146, La Porte, TX 77571

GENERATION PARK CAMPUS

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VISION & MISSION



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.

SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS



A gift to the San Jacinto College Foundation transforms lives, enriches our community, and provides tomorrow's community leaders. For more than 25 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.

COMMUNITY IMPACT



Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 45,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA+ by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College, visit sanjac.edu.

