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# NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

## Congrats, class of 2023

Congratulations to San Jacinto College fall 2023 graduates! Spanning from 17 to 76, graduates beamed while accepting their diplomas at the Dec. 17 ceremony at Minute Maid Park.

In fall 2023, San Jac graduates earned nearly 2,500 certificates and degrees. During the ceremony, approximately 950 students walked across the stage, cheered by 14,000 guests.

View the Flickr photo album at [bit.ly/SJCGradsFall23](https://bit.ly/SJCGradsFall23).

## Public invited to Mind Trekkers on March 7

San Jacinto College is excited to host the Mind Trekkers STEM Festival Family Night at the Central Campus March 7.

Free and open to the public, the family night includes fun STEM experiments and demonstrations Thursday, March 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology, 7901 Fairmont Parkway in Pasadena.

Open to children of all ages, Mind Trekkers allows participants to conduct hands-on experiments to learn more about science, technology, engineering, and math. Experiments include liquid nitrogen ice cream, a fire tornado, burning money, moment of inertia spinner, foam gnomes, and more. This event is always fun for big and little kids alike as they explore STEM fields.

Scan the QR code to see a video of last year's Mind Trekkers event, and mark your calendar now to attend on March 7.



# ALUMNA EMBRACES JOURNEY TO SELF-DISCOVERY

By **Neesha Hosein**  
San Jacinto College

One San Jacinto College student succeeded beyond her own expectations.

Umahi Agwu completed her grade-school education in Nigeria, where her family is from, and came to Houston to start her college journey. As a life science major with dreams of becoming a doctor, she knew there was much to accomplish before reaching that finish line.

To become more familiar with the field, she found an opportunity to shadow a doctor at an obstetrics and gynecology clinic. But Agwu's discomfort around blood and needles proved medicine was not the practical career choice.

While helping her dad run his beauty supply company, she realized she had a knack for business instead. She joined the San Jac Investment Club, got involved with Future Business Leaders of America, and soon forged a new career path.

## Mosaic mentorship boosted confidence

The Mosaic program, which supports Black students through mentorships, connected Agwu with Melanie Sanchez, integrated reading and writing professor. Having a mentor was very helpful for Agwu, as Sanchez advised her with writing essays, applying to colleges, and landing a science lab internship at Rice University and guided her through starting a student club.

"Umahi is an exemplary student," Sanchez said. "She worked diligently to establish a student organization, the

Transfer Student Association, which helps students stay on track with application deadlines and submissions to their desired four-year university after completing their studies here at San Jacinto College."

When Sanchez first met Agwu through Mosaic, she noticed that Agwu clearly displayed academic excellence, and it was important, as her mentor, to ensure that she recognized that in herself.

"What was once a shy, bashful student has risen to be a determined, vocal leader," Sanchez said. "Umahi is driven to make a positive impact in our community and global society, respectively. More importantly, she has proven her greatness to herself. Umahi is going to show Duke University and the world the brilliance of a scholar from San Jacinto College."

## Collecting accolades, building a future

Business professor and Phi Theta Kappa advisor Elizabeth McKinley has taught Agwu in class and beyond, working with her in the honor society.

"She has a grasp on concepts when they are presented in class, is a hard worker, and was a joy to work with in PTK," McKinley said.

A few of Agwu's accomplishments include serving as the PTK student vice president and being recognized as part of its All-Texas Coca-Cola Academic Team. She was one of 15 students to receive PTK's 2023 Hites Transfer Scholarship of \$10,000. Winners were selected from

more than 2,700 applicants based on outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and engagement in college and community activities.

In 2022 and 2023, Agwu placed in the top 10 in the U.S. at the Future Business Leaders

of America Collegiate Division's state and national competitions.

Agwu never thought attending Duke University was possible. An acceptance letter, a campus tour with her parents, and inspiration from a Duke alumna she met during the visit

proved otherwise.

She started her first semester at Duke in fall 2023 as an economics major.

"It has been going very well, a little rough at first, but definitely a great experience so far," Agwu said.



Photo by Neesha Hosein, San Jacinto College

# CERN INTERNS CHASE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND POSSIBLE

**By Courtney Morris**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Raul Diaz and Estevan Salinas pinched themselves.

One moment, they had been sitting in a physics classroom. The next, unpacking luggage in a Saint-Genis-Pouilly apartment on the France/Switzerland border, with the Jura Mountains spanning the horizon.

Neither had expected to globetrot, much less join research at CERN, the European Council for Nuclear Research in Geneva. Now the two San Jacinto College students would be contributing to groundbreaking particle physics research alongside graduate students.

## Going global

Diaz and Salinas are getting used to firsts: They're the first in their families to attend college and now the first San Jac students to have interned at CERN since the pandemic.

Since 1954, CERN has brought together the world's top physicists and engineers to study subatomic particles using complex particle accelerators and detectors. Thanks to San Jac physics professor Dr. Laria Redjimi, San Jac is the only community college nationwide sending students to CERN. Beyond contributing to CERN physics experiments herself, Redjimi advises students and runs the internship together with Rice University faculty.

"Not only do our students explore amazing science, discussions, and critical thinking that have advanced the field of physics for decades now, but they also form a very rich network among brilliant scientists in a multidisciplinary, multicultural environment in Geneva," she said.

What made Diaz and Salinas stand out as applicants? Redjimi says motivation, teamwork, and curiosity.

"I didn't know what or who CERN was," Salinas said. "But when I looked it up and saw that it was the European Council for Nuclear Research, I said, 'I need to go!'"

Diaz knew about CERN, give or take some sci-fi. He pictured "this world-impacting, massive machine" opening portals and channeling currents into a mad scientist-type experiment.

"Having the chance to set foot in one of the most prestigious facilities in the field of particle physics would be a miracle, breaking the mold for my family," he said.

## Exploring new realms

Joining the Compact Muon Solenoid experiment as technical students in spring 2023, Diaz and Salinas helped with eco-gas and aging studies of the Gas Electron Multiplier/Cathode Strip Chamber detectors by collecting data and performing maintenance.

With their work ethic, it wasn't unusual for the two interns to get questions like "How far along are you on your Ph.D.?"

Diaz's science fiction imaginings almost mirrored reality: Their warehouse-like lab contained diagrams everywhere, humming computers, radiation warnings, and physicists in PPE pacing back and forth.

"After a while, it felt like we belonged," Salinas said.

Despite challenges like occasional language barriers, the two San Jac students made their mark. Before a scheduled test beam firing, they troubleshooted part of a proportional gas chamber that wasn't working. By the end, they also wrote software instructions to help future students collect data.

"I'm capable of more than I'm aware of," Salinas said. "If I place myself in these difficult situations, I can succeed and thrive."

## Redefining possible

How do you process an experience like CERN? Neither Diaz nor Salinas had traveled farther than Mexico before. Now they've interned at the world's top scientific research institution.

For both, CERN meant squashing self-doubt and redefining possible.

The lessons learned will go with them to their next destination — University of Houston-Clear Lake for computer engineering degrees.

"If I had let those doubts win, I wouldn't have gone," Salinas said. "Because I let the opportunity take me there, I succeeded."

After landing in Geneva, Diaz almost boarded a return flight. Now he's leaving a different legacy for his family.

"Your fears and the inner voice that's trying to dictate your decisions — don't listen to them too often," he said. "Chase opportunities like this. If it's possible, why not do it?"



Photo courtesy of Raul Diaz

Hundreds of U.S. physicists help operate the Compact Muon Solenoid experiment at CERN's Large Hadron Collider. CMS numbers among two large experiments studying the source of electroweak symmetry breaking and plays a leading role in detector construction/operations, computing and software, and data analysis.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and National Science Foundation, the U.S. student internships cover instrumentation, technology, and computing projects. Analyzing data from the CMS experiment, students use computational tools and data science methods to learn about fundamental particles and their interactions.

Mentors include university faculty, scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and advanced graduate students from CMS-affiliated U.S. institutions.

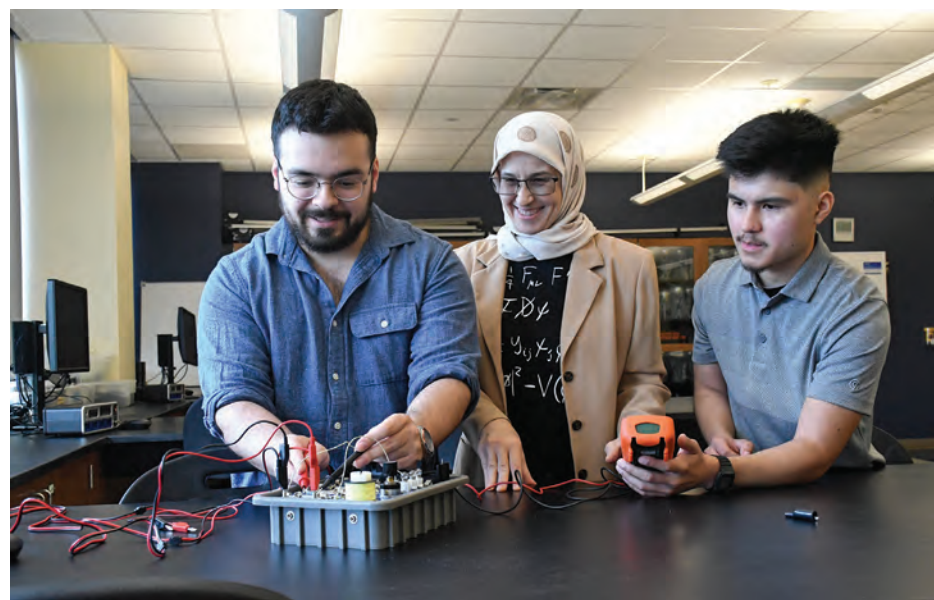


Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

# BI-ANNUAL GALA TO BENEFIT PROMISE @ SAN JAC SCHOLARSHIP

*LyondellBasell serving as title sponsor for Hollywood Nights Gala*

**By Amanda Fenwick**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

The San Jacinto College and LyondellBasell Hollywood Nights Gala presented by the Sinor Family will take place on Friday, May 17, 2024, at the LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology at the Central Campus.

Hosted by the San Jacinto College Foundation, this black-tie affair will celebrate students and their ability to reach for the stars and achieve their educational goals. All event proceeds will go to the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship, an opportunity for any high school graduate who lives in the College's taxing district to earn a certificate or associate degree debt-free.

"We look forward to a glamorous night of celebrating our San Jac stars — our amazing students — while raising money for the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship," said Dr. Brenda Hellyer, San Jacinto College Chancellor. "We thank LyondellBasell for being our title sponsor and supporting the important work we are doing to provide a trained and skilled workforce. We also appreciate

the Sinor Family and each of our other sponsors for their commitment to the Promise Scholarship and San Jacinto College."

The Hollywood Nights Gala will feature a cocktail and networking hour at 6 p.m., where guests can interact with students, bid on silent auction items, take part in a gift card punch wall, and sample delicious appetizers and drinks. Afterward, guests will enjoy a three-course dinner, followed by the presentation of the Legacy Award and remarks from Promise Scholars and College leaders.

The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship is open to all high school seniors in San Jacinto College's taxing district, regardless of GPA and family income. To receive the scholarship, students must meet all deadlines for pledging and applying to San Jac, completing all financial aid documents, and enrolling full time at the College for the fall semester after their graduation. In addition, they must complete their certificate or degree within three years.

The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship covers the cost of tuition, books, and supplies so students can attend without financial worries.



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Business

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## YOUR PROMISE!

With the **Promise @ San Jac Scholarship**, in-district high school seniors are eligible for money to fully cover tuition and course materials at San Jacinto College!

- **PLEDGE AND APPLY TO SAN JAC by 2/22/24**  
Scan the QR code below to view scholarship requirements and to pledge. Then complete our free admission application at [goapplytexas.org](http://goapplytexas.org).
- **APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID by 4/25/24**  
You must submit a FAFSA or TASFA application to qualify for Promise @ San Jac.
- **REGISTER FOR CLASSES by 7/18/24**  
You must complete all enrollment steps before registering.

**SCAN TO PLEDGE!**

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Photos by San Jacinto College

Learn more about the Hollywood Nights Gala at [sanjac.edu/gala](http://sanjac.edu/gala) and Promise @ San Jac Scholarship at [sanjac.edu/promise](http://sanjac.edu/promise).

View photos from the 2022 gala at [bit.ly/SJCGala22](http://bit.ly/SJCGala22).

# ARROWOOD NUMBERS AMONG 2023 TOP WOMEN OF MARITIME

**By Melissa Trevizo**  
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Captain Amy Arrowood, San Jacinto College’s director of the maritime credit program, has been named one of the 2023 Top Women in Maritime by Marine Log Magazine.

With a career that spans more than 20 years, Arrowood served in the U.S. Coast Guard and sailed U.S. flag vessels coastwide and internationally.

“This designation is an honor,” Arrowood said. “I’m proud of the maritime network I’ve made for myself over the years and the professionals I call friends. I’ve received several awards for my work, and I’m honored by my recognition.”

Arrowood graduated from Texas A&M University-Galveston with a Bachelor of Science in marine transportation and joined the Coast Guard as a commissioned officer in 2002. Besides racking up many memorable experiences while being in port in 15 countries, she earned the U.S. Coast Guard Meritorious Team Commendation and Unit

Commendation in 2004 and Commendation Medal in 2005.

Arrowood’s connection to San Jac began in 2014 when she joined an advisory committee for the Maritime Technology and Training Center as a port captain and marine operations manager for J.A.M. Marine Services. After signing on as a maritime transportation faculty member, she began to teach classes and curate the program’s curriculum.

“It was a small program that filled up quickly, and I knew each of my students well,” Arrowood said. “If they ever missed class, I was checking up on them to see if they were OK. Even now, if my students are absent or miss assignments, I’m waiting at the top of the stairs to catch them to see how they are doing.”

Arrowood earned the College’s 2018-2019 Administrator Excellence Award for serving as a role model, working collaboratively, meeting students’ and other employees’ needs, and exemplifying dedication, service, and involvement in the

College community.

“Part of the joy of being an instructor is seeing the outcomes of our program,” she said. “I have also enjoyed seeing some of my students achieving ‘firsts.’ I’ve seen the first female deckhand and tankerman for a few companies now. I’m proud to have helped my students get into those positions.”

Since Arrowood joined San Jac, the maritime programs have grown. Two years after starting maritime training, the College introduced the state’s first and only associate degree for maritime transportation. This degree program combines Coast Guard- and Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping-approved

maritime training with the college-level academics required of an associate degree.

“We are so proud of Captain Arrowood for her nomination and selection as one of Marine Log magazine’s Top Women in Maritime for 2023,” said Ken Tidwell, maritime interim associate vice chancellor. “As the maritime industry continues to increase diversity and bring more women into its ranks, her selection out of over 200 professionals is more than deserving. I cannot think of a better ambassador for excellence as a maritime transportation professional or greater champion for opening doors and breaking ceilings for future generations of mariners.”



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

Learn more about the award at [marinelog.com/news/meet-marine-logs-top-women-in-maritime-2023](https://marinelog.com/news/meet-marine-logs-top-women-in-maritime-2023).

## Maritime Program at a Glance

Earning your sea legs requires hands-on experience on ships ranging from inland towboats to the world’s largest ships. San Jac offers more than 50 courses approved by the U.S. Coast Guard, each following internationally recognized Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping. Are you ready to learn what it takes to be a mariner? The Maritime Campus includes a 45,000-square-foot building, high-tech engineering simulators, a training dock, and an industry dock.

Scan the QR code to learn more.



## SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Through Feb. 29	Guest Artist: Gale Rodriguez	Varies	Free   Grant Fine Arts Center, North Campus Gallery (N1.106)   Contact <a href="mailto:joe.clark@sjcd.edu">joe.clark@sjcd.edu</a>
Feb. 8	College Community Day	All day	No classes held day and evening
Feb. 9-10	Artists for Hope Charity Dance Concert	7 p.m.	Tickets: <a href="https://sanjacdance.ludus.com">sanjacdance.ludus.com</a>   South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (\$15.151)
Feb. 15-17	“Little Women”	7:30 p.m.	\$10 general admission   Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
Feb. 18	“Little Women” (Matinee)	2:30 p.m.	\$10 general admission   Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)
Feb. 29-March 3 & March 7-10	“Henry V”	TBA	Tickets: <a href="https://sjcstheatreilm.ludus.com">sjcstheatreilm.ludus.com</a>   South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Proscenium Theatre (\$15.151)

All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu/calendar](https://sanjac.edu/calendar).

# THIS MONTH IN SOCIAL MEDIA



## Instagram

Today, we had really special guests at South Campus. These great yoga partners came to campus to guide us through a yoga class! We had so much fun doing yoga and hanging out with our goat friends.



215 Likes | 84 Shares | 11 Saves



## Facebook

The San Jacinto College Board of Trustees has approved a new bachelor's degree in information technology with an emphasis in cybersecurity. Scheduled to begin in fall 2024, this will be the third bachelor's degree that the College will offer.



69 Reactions | 14 Shares | 43 Link Clicks



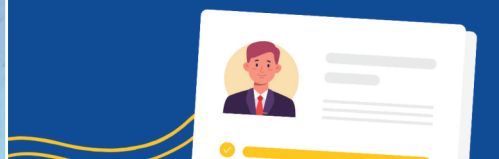
## X

We're happy to announce that our theatre artistic director Dr. Jerry Ivins was named the 2023 Higher Education Educator of the Year by the Texas Education Theatre Association.



10 Likes | 1 Retweet | 17 post Clicks

## TIPS FOR BUILDING A GOOD RESUME



## LinkedIn

Getting ready to job hunt? Having a professional resume is a key element in landing your dream job. Check out these tips that could help elevate your resume game. Let's make that first impression count!



25 Reactions | 222 Post Clicks

# YOUR GOALS. YOUR COLLEGE.



## SAN JACINTO<sup>SM</sup> COLLEGE

### NORTH CAMPUS

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

13455 Lockwood Rd., Houston, TX 77044

### ONLINE

[sanjac.edu/online](https://sanjac.edu/online)

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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](https://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 41,000 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 and Aa2 by Standard & Poor's and Moody's. For more information about San Jacinto College, visit [sanjac.edu](https://sanjac.edu).