



# President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees



July 25, 2023

Acting President Dr. Diana Bajrami



Photo from left: CoA Acting President Dr. Diana Bajrami and PCCD Trustee Bill Withrow at the City of Alameda 2023 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade

## Over 60,000 Attend the City of Alameda's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade

The 46th Annual City of Alameda's 4th of July Parade, titled The Island's Independence Celebration, is reportedly the longest in the nation with a route that spans over three miles. College of Alameda was one of 170 entries in this year's event. CoA President **Dr. Diana Bajrami** and PCCD Trustee **Bill Withrow** rode in an antique car and were among 2,500 parade participants. This popular parade drew a crowd of over 60,000 spectators from around the Bay Area and boasted a variety of fun entries, including equestrians, dance troops, floats, antique cars, community groups, and marching bands, from community members, organizations, local schools, and more.



Photo left: ASCOA President Natay Myers; Vice President of Operations, Semeon Thomson; Vice President of Programming, Junhao “Jay” Ma; Treasurer, Marcus Sillemon; and Senator, Macarena Valenzuela; pose with President Bajrami, Director Rodriguez, and Viviana Rodriguez-Smith as they were recognized for their service in the 2022 – 2023 academic year. Photo right: Class of 2023 Salutatorian, Octavian Yuen delivers a special address to his fellow honorees.

## CoA Holds Its First In-person Scholars’ Banquet since 2019

On Monday, May 22, 2023, the Office of Student Activities and Campus Life hosted the first in-person Scholars ‘Banquet since 2019. The Scholar’s Banquet honored the Associated Students of the College of Alameda (ASCOA), the Class of 2023 Valedictorian **Verlie Carmack Collins**, Salutatorian **Octavian Yuen**, and President’s Medallion Winner **Juliette “Ottie” Breen**, and all CoA scholarship and award recipients through the Peralta Foundation. [Xingones](#) restaurant catered the event and desserts were provided by [Lala’s Tea Time Treats](#), both locally owned small businesses.

Class of 2023 Salutatorian **Octavian Yuen** delivered a special keynote address at the event. Yuen is just 16 years-old and concurrently attending Encinal High School and CoA. As a concurrently enrolled student Yuen recently earned an associate degree from CoA in Computer Information Systems. He will complete his senior year of high school at Encinal this upcoming academic year and the sky is the limit for this enthusiastic and capable young man.

### The 2023 CoA honorees are:

#### Salutatorian

Octavian Yuen

#### Valedictorian

Verlie Carmack Collins

#### President’s Medallion Scholarship

Juliette Breen

#### Associated Students of College of Alameda

President Natay Myers

Vice President of Operations Semeon Thomson

Vice President of Programming, Junhao “Jay” Ma

Treasurer Marcus Sillemon

Senator Macarena Valenzuela

*The mission of the College of Alameda is to serve the educational needs of its diverse community by providing comprehensive and flexible programs and resources to empower students to achieve their goals.*

**Honoring ASCOA Graduates**

President Natay Myers  
Senator Macarena Valenzuela

**Scholarship Winners**

**Peralta Avanzando Through College Program**

Michele Almodobar  
Xitlaly Vasquez Castillo

**Diesel Mechanics Scholarship**

Alfredo Vasquez

**Ozzie Day Scholarship**

Yumeus "Missy" Taylor

**Daniel Gilbert Memorial Scholarship**

Antoine Ison  
Axel Ramos  
Byungsoo Kim  
Christian Delgadillo  
Felix M. Ruiz-Pelayo  
Jafar Hosseinzadeh  
Pierce Cappache  
Richard Nguyen  
Steven Yau  
Tommy To

**PepsiCo Scholarship**

Michele Almodobar  
Xitlaly Vasquez Castillo  
Sahar Sadat



## Bakersfield High School Tours CoA Campus

On Saturday, May 21, 2023, Director of Student Activities and Campus Life **Natalie Rodriguez** provided a campus tour for 12 students and their families who traveled from the Central Valley's Bakersfield High School as a part of the Providing Opportunities for Development Empowerment & Resilience (PODER) program in association with the [Parent and Family Center](#).

## Staff Transitions and New Hires

Dean of Enrollment Services Dr. **Amy Lee** has taken a new position as the Dean of Enrollment Services at Berkeley City College. For over 10 years, Dean Lee delivered comprehensive leadership and supervision for CoA student services departments. She provided vision and expertise in spearheading new programs to support student enrollment and successfully expanded the use of technology in student services, including texting, chatbot, and CRM tools.

CoA Dean of Liberal Studies and Language Arts **Lilia Celhay** accepted the position of Acting Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Berkeley City College. Her last day at CoA was July 13, 2023. Dean Celhay served as Dean at CoA since 2016. During her tenure at the College, Dean Celhay provided exemplary leadership and unwavering support for students.

Senior Systems Administrator **Balamurali Sampathraj (Bala)** has returned to CoA after serving as Laney College's Acting Information Technology Director since February of last year. Bala has been associated with CoA since 2001 in various capacities, including first as a student, part time classified staff, and since 2016 as the senior systems administrator.



*Interim Dean of Enrollment Services  
Natalie Rodriguez*

**Natalie Rodriguez** has been appointed as Interim Dean of Enrollment Services. Dean Rodriguez previously served as CoA's Director of Student Activities and Campus Life and was part of the CoA Outreach team, where she served for four years as Outreach and Retention Specialist. Interim Dean Rodriguez provided adept leadership in her role as Director of Student Activities and Campus Life during the pandemic. Interim Vice President of Student Services Dr. **Mildred S. Lewis** recognized her accomplishments in an email sent to CoA faculty and staff on July 12, 2023. Natalie has a Master of Arts degree in New Media Journalism from Full Sail University and a Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic and Chicana Studies, from the University of California at Berkeley.



*Outreach Coordinator  
Lilibeth Mata Juarez*

**Lilibeth Mata Juarez** was recently hired as CoA's new Outreach Specialist. Lilibeth was born in Oaxaca, Mexico, and grew up in Oakland. She previously worked at Cuesta College as a Bilingual Enrollment Success Specialist, where she lead outreach activities and supported student registration. She also provided leadership as the AIM to DREAM Center Coordinator, serving undocumented students at Allan Hancock College. In addition to serving community college students, she has worked as a Case Manager serving unhoused clients with the Golden Gate Silicon Valley YWCA. Lilibeth has her Master of Arts Degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of San Francisco, a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California at Merced, and an Associate of Arts in Psychology Degree from Chabot College.