

CSUB COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

As we wrap up summer and welcome in the new academic year, we are excited to introduce the first of a series of newsletters for the college. With this first issue, we are sharing some important highlights and upcoming events for the College of Social Sciences and Education.



No Ordinary Home, But a Place of Hope

Hello, my name is Luis Vega, and I currently serve as interim dean of the College of Social Sciences and Education. I have been at CSUB 30 years and to me CSUB is a place of hope, our home. Education was transformational for me, a panacea for poverty. I know it is the same for many of our students. The role of education is to improve lives, our communities, and the future.

Cesar Chavez once said, "The end of all education should surely be service to others," caring for each other, as the big family that we are. As we carry on with our mission, remember that our university is also a home of love, hope. We too are an ordinary family who can create a better tomorrow, together.

I hope you enjoy what will be the first of periodic newsletters in the College of Social Sciences and Education.

Luis Vega, Interim Dean



SSE HIGHLIGHTS

The SSE Dean's Office is happy to share the news that Dr. Amy Gancarz-Kausch has joined the team as the acting Associate Dean for the College of Social Sciences and Education beginning July 1, 2025. Dr. Gancarz joins us from her position as Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology. Here, she demonstrated an accomplished record of leadership, scholarship and dedication to mentoring students. We look forward to her continued impact on our college.



This spring brought several moments of recognition and celebration across our college:

We honored Dr. Debbie Meadows, former faculty in Teacher Education and Director of Education Assessment and Accreditation, at her retirement celebration. After 22 years of dedicated service to the university, she leaves a lasting legacy of student-centered leadership, academic excellence, and institutional impact.



Dr. Luis Vega, professor of Psychology and interim dean, was recognized for 30 years of dedicated service at CSUB during the University Awards Ceremony. His leadership and advocacy have shaped the College of Social Sciences and Education into the inclusive, student-centered college it is today.

SSE staff and faculty participated in Future Runner Day, proudly representing the college and engaging with prospective students and families. The event showcased the heart of our community and our continued commitment to access, equity, and educational opportunity.



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

CSUB alumna Kristyn Walker BA Kinesiology has been accepted into Duke University's prestigious physical therapy residency program, a highly competitive and nationally recognized opportunity. A standout scholar, Kristyn credits her CSUB mentors and hands-on experience for shaping her path. We're proud to see her represent the 'Runner spirit on a national stage.



For Allison Burrowes, MA Social Work, BA Sociology pursuing a graduate education at CSUB was about more than earning degrees—it was about discovering her purpose. As the 2023 Rising 'Runner Award recipient, Alison has used her passion for helping others to launch a meaningful career in program development and student support. Her story is a reminder that curiosity and compassion go a long way.



When Dr. Janet Barnett Pierucci stepped onto CSUB's campus in the 1970s, she had no idea how transformative those years would be. As a first-generation college student, she leaned on the support of her professors and peers to navigate unfamiliar territory. Her time at CSUB sparked a passion for psychology and gave her the tools to understand human behavior, trauma, and healing. She earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees here, building a foundation that would carry her through decades of meaningful work in the field of clinical psychology. She eventually went on to earn a Ph.D. and worked as a licensed psychologist, helping countless individuals through challenges involving trauma, grief, and mental health.

Now retired, Dr. Pierucci looks back on CSUB as the place that shaped her confidence and gave her a sense of direction. Her story is one of resilience, growth, and community—values she has carried into every aspect of her professional life. In recognition of her contributions to mental health and her dedication to helping others, CSUB will honor her as one of the 2025 Alumni Hall of Fame inductees. For Dr. Pierucci, the honor is more than an award—it's a full-circle moment that reflects just how deeply her alma mater impacted her journey.

ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

CSUB has announced the 2025 class of Alumni Hall of Fame inductees, recognizing exceptional graduates for their achievements and lasting contributions to their fields and communities. The honorees include Donna Barba Higuera (B.S. Biology, '91), an award winning author of children's literature, Dr. Janet Barnett Pierucci (B.A. & M.S. Psychology, '72, '76), a clinical psychologist and longtime advocate for mental health and education; Judge Elizabet Rodriguez (B.A. Criminal Justice, '00), the first Spanish-speaking Latina judicial officer in Kern County Superior Court; and Dan Shanyfelt (B.S. Business Administration, '97), founder and CEO of Miramar International Real Estate & Investment.



Each honoree exemplifies what's possible with a CSUB degree. From writing award-winning children's literature and building a billion-dollar real estate company, to expanding mental health access and breaking barriers in the courtroom, their stories highlight leadership, resilience, and service. The induction ceremony took place on February 20, 2025, during Homecoming Week. As Director of Alumni Engagement Sarah Hendrick shared, "Donna, Janet, Elizabet, and Dan are inspirational leaders." Their impact reaches far beyond campus—and SSE couldn't be prouder.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

[Featured in the CSU System / News]

For Hilda Cárdenas, B.A. in Liberal Studies, the path to becoming an educator was deeply personal. A first-generation college graduate from Lamont, she grew up attending schools in the same district where she'll soon begin her teaching career. Inspired by the CSU Bakersfield diplomas she saw in her childhood classrooms, she set her sights on CSUB early. "I always thought it was so cool to see those diplomas on the wall," she recalls. "I wanted to go there—or at least visit. Now I've done both."

At CSUB, Cárdenas found more than just a degree—she found a community. She built a strong support system through staff and peers, especially in the Cultivando Maestras/os Kern Multilingual Residency Program, which placed her in a fifth-grade dual immersion classroom in the Lamont Elementary School District. Through the program, she earned her multiple subject credential and a bilingual authorization in Spanish. "This program taught me to be proud of my name, my language and my culture," she says. "And I want my students to feel the same."

Cárdenas returns to Lamont this July as a full-time teacher, with future plans to pursue a master's and eventually teach at CSUB.

Read more about Hilda's journey in the CSU's statewide feature: [CSU Grads Fueling California's Future](#)



**HILDA CÁRDENAS | CSU
BAKERSFIELD**
**MULTIPLE SUBJECT TEACHING
CREDENTIAL**

Mia Gangle, a psychology major, recently published a peer-reviewed article "Social Psychological Profiling Model of Victimization and Perpetration Processes Involved in Sex Trafficking". Her work not only proposed a profiling model and a four-step prevention plan, but it has already begun influencing legislation at the state level.

Reflecting on her experience, Mia urges professors to mentor undergraduate research and reminds students to be confident in their academic abilities. She hopes her article inspires others to pursue meaningful scholarship early in their academic careers.

Read Mia's article: [here](#).



2025 Dean's List - College of Social Sciences and Education

We're proud to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of our students! The 2025 Dean's List honors undergraduate students in the College of Social Sciences and Education who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and academic excellence.

[View the full list here.](#)

Congratulations to all honorees — your hard work and commitment continue to inspire!

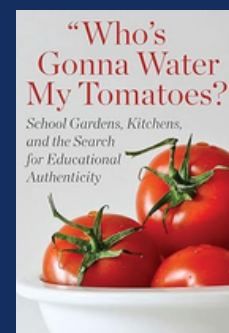
FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to Dr. Zachary Zenko, Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director in the Department of Kinesiology, for being named a 2024 Reviewer of the Year for the journal *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*. This prestigious recognition marks the third time Dr. Zenko has received this honor (2021, 2023, and 2024), acknowledging his continued excellence and dedication to advancing scholarship in the field.



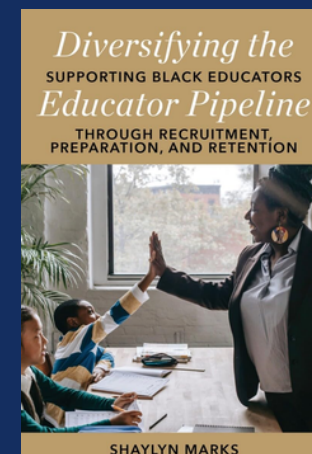
Dr. Szolowicz hopes this book will inspire a new generation of educators to view education through a different lens—one that prioritizes holistic, authentic learning experiences.

Learn more about the book here: [Who's Gonna Water My Tomatoes? on Amazon](#)



Dr. Shaylyn Marks, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education, has released *Diversifying the Educator Pipeline*, a powerful critique of current efforts to recruit and retain Black educators. Grounded in culturally sustaining pedagogy and her years of classroom and research experience, Dr. Marks offers actionable strategies to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments.

[Available now on Amazon: *Diversifying the Educator Pipeline*](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 22nd, 2025

General Faculty Meeting

August 25th, 2025

First Day of Classes

September 1st

Labor Day- Campus Closed

September 3rd, 2025

Census Day

September 8th, 2025

Kern County College Night 5pm-8pm Dignity Health Arena

September 29th, 2025

Academic Advising for Continuing Students Begins (for Spring 2026)

October 27th, 2025

Registration for Continuing Students Begins (for Spring 2026)



First 15 Students On The First Day of Classes

Be one of the first 15 people on the first day of school on August 25th, 2025 8am-11am to get a free goodie bag!

Join us on the Red Brick Road and start the year with something special.



CELEBRATING 15 YEARS



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND EDUCATION
CSU BAKERSFIELD



Social Sciences and Education Study Areas

Baccalaureate Degrees	Supporting Activities	Master's Degrees (MA / MS)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anthropology 2. Human Development & Child, Adolescent & Family Studies 3. Criminal Justice 4. Ethnic Studies - forthcoming 5. Liberal Studies 6. Kinesiology 7. Political Science 8. Psychology 9. Sociology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre-Law 2. Center for Social Justice 3. Discipline Honor Societies 4. Discipline Clubs 5. Applied Experience Placements 6. Faculty Research 7. Central Valley (CV) Pathway 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling Psychology 2. Educational Administration 3. Kinesiology 4. School Counseling 5. Special Education 6. Social Work 7. Teacher Education
		Doctoral Degree (Ed.D.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educational Leadership

Teaching Credentials --> (a) Single Subject, (b) Multiple Subject, (c) Special Education, (d) PPS Credential
<https://www.csub.edu/credentials/>



Discover Your Future in Social Sciences and Education!
[Learn More Here](#)



Thank you for being a part of our vibrant SSE community. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and continuing our shared journey in education and growth.

Wishing you a wonderful start to the new school year!

College of Social Sciences and Education Dean's Office

Have an important update to share in future issues?

We'd love to hear from you!

Please contact us at sse@csb.edu

OUR MAJORS TRULY DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

SUPPORT SSE. YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT ARE INVALUABLE!



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
BAKERSFIELD

College of Social Sciences
 and Education