



# President's Report to the PCCD Board of Trustees



March 26, 2024

Acting President Dr. Diana Bajrami



College of Alameda (COA) hosted the "Education: Becoming a Lifelong Learner" symposium on Friday, March 8, 2024, which was sponsored by the Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance.

## COA Hosts the Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance "Education: Becoming a Lifelong Learner" Event

College of Alameda (COA) hosted the "Education: Becoming a Lifelong Learner" symposium on Friday, March 8, 2024. Sponsored by the Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance, this event featured a dynamic lineup of speakers dedicated to providing lifelong learning opportunities. Coinciding with International Women's Day, the symposium featured a keynote address by COA alumna and prominent Bay Area leader and entrepreneur, **Dr. Chris Wachira**. Joining Dr. Wachira were an array of speakers, including **Pasquale Scuderi**, Superintendent of Alameda Unified School District; **Jennifer Williams**, President of the AUSD Board; **Lianna Lau**, Student Board of Education Representative for AUSD; **Felicia Vargas**, CTE Pathway Specialist at AUSD; **Vicki Sedlek**, Executive Director of the Alameda Education Foundation; and **Mike Robbins**, Motivational Speaker and Author.

The COA team presented as a panel comprised of **Dr. Diana Bajrami**, Acting President; **Maurice Jones**, Interim VPI; **William Ochoa**, Dean; **Louie Martirez**, Classified Senate President; **Drew Burgess**, Art Professor and Professional Development Committee Chair; **Natay Myers**, ASCOA President; **Shawn Foster**; and **Saurav Pudasaini**, classified professionals. They provided an overview of the excellent work done by COA to engage the community with the college and emphasized the importance of this partnership in supporting the ever-evolving educational needs of our community.

Acting President Bajrami and the COA team kicked off the event expressing gratitude for the Chamber and Alameda Education Foundation's efforts in bringing the community together to enrich community resources, expand educational opportunities, and foster collaboration.

AUSD Board President **Jennifer Williams** and Superintendent **Pasquale Scuderi** also delivered a compelling presentation on the state of the AUSD, expressing appreciation to the college and the board for fostering collaboration across all segments of education to support our community.

Other notable speakers included **Dr. Cindy Acker** from The Child Unique Montessori, who provided an insightful presentation on the state of preschool and pre-K education and its current challenges.

Motivational speaker and author **Mike Robbins** delivered a presentation titled “Authentic Leadership,” emphasizing the importance of authenticity and appreciation in personal and professional life. As a leadership expert, he partners with some of the top organizations globally to enhance culture, performance, trust, and belonging.

COA Alumna and CEO of Karibu Wine Bar and Wachira Wines, **Dr. Chris Wachira**, shared her experiences in building her successful brand and business, Wachira Wines. As the first Kenyan-born winemaker, distributor, importer, and exporter in California, Dr. Wachira's journey from a young immigrant earning her Doctorate to creating a black-owned, woman-owned winery in Alameda County is a testament to her extraordinary vision and efforts. She spoke passionately about her love for winemaking and the sense of community built from sharing a bottle of wine with strangers.



*PCCD Trustee Bill Withrow, PCCD Chancellor Tammeil Gilkerson, and COA faculty and staff leaders at the State of the City of Alameda event.*

## COA Was Recently Praised at the State of the City of Alameda Event

College of Alameda was recently recognized at the State of the City of Alameda event, which was held on Feb 29, 2024, for its outstanding work within the community. PCCD Chancellor **Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson**, PCCD Trustee **Bill Withrow**, and COA faculty and staff leaders were in attendance. **Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft** recognized the Chancellor, PCCD Trustee, and the college's exceptional efforts to serve the City of Alameda community.

*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.*



Enrollment Services Coordinator Nickey Heredia and Student Worker Josh Estrada at the Oakland International High School Fair.

## Students at the Oakland International High School's After High School Options Fair Are Enthusiastic about Enrolling at COA

On Monday, February 27, 2024, Enrollment Services Coordinator **Nickey Heredia**, and Student Worker **Josh Estrada**, represented College of Alameda at Oakland International High School's After High School Options Fair. They enthusiastically shared information and resources about COA with 11th and 12th graders. Many students expressed interest in COA's Promise and Career Education programs, and some mentioned their intent to attend COA after their high school graduation.



COA's new part-time counselors: Charles Washington, Marvin Thompson, and Teresa Castro. Photo credit: Dr. Shalamon Duke.

and community support. Born and raised in San Jose, CA, to Mexican immigrants, Teresa embarked on her educational path at De Anza College, where she became part of the Puente Program. Puente provided her with a supportive community and invaluable guidance from mentors and counselors, enabling her to pursue higher education. After earning her Associates of Arts in English and Liberal Arts, Teresa transferred to the University

## Introducing COA's New Part-Time Counselors

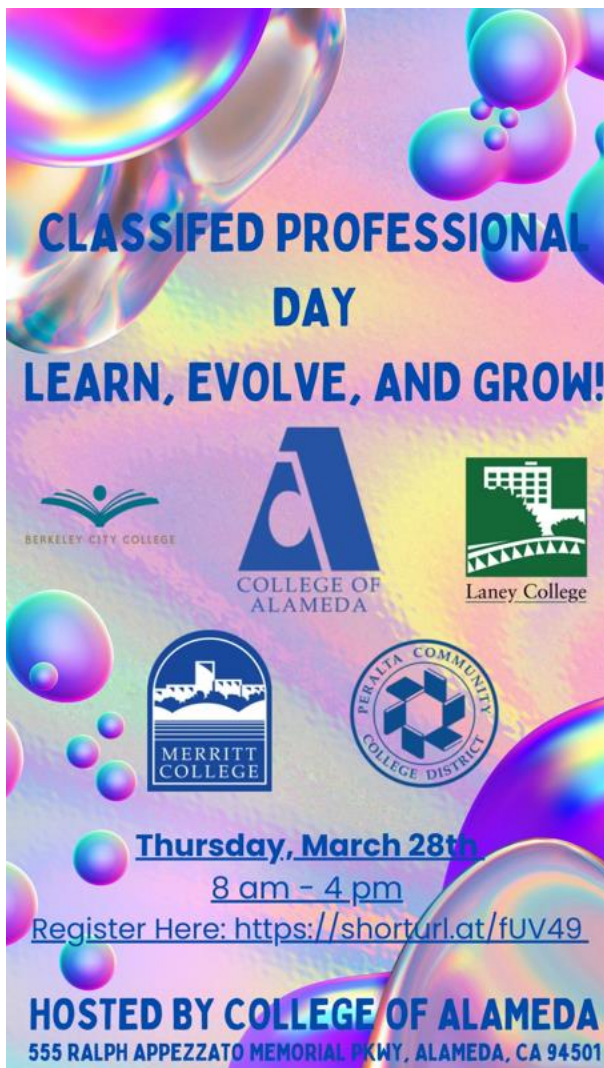
The College of Alameda Counseling Department recently welcomed three outstanding individuals to its team of part-time counselors. We are thrilled to have Puente Counselor Teresa Castro, General Counselor Charles Washington, and Rising Scholars/General Counselor Marvin Thompson join our counseling team! You can read more about them in their biographies below.

**Teresa Castro, M.A.** –Teresa Castro's journey exemplifies the transformative power of education and community support. Born and raised in San Jose, CA, to Mexican immigrants, Teresa embarked on her educational path at De Anza College, where she became part of the Puente Program. Puente provided her with a supportive community and invaluable guidance from mentors and counselors, enabling her to pursue higher education. After earning her Associates of Arts in English and Liberal Arts, Teresa transferred to the University

of California, Berkeley, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English. Inspired by the profound impact of community college and Puente on her own journey, Teresa earned a Master of Arts in Counselor Education at San Jose State University. Teresa began her professional experience at De Anza College, where she interned with the Puente Program, worked full-time with the Office of Outreach, and part-time with the International Student Program. Throughout her career, she has thrived in supporting first-generation and underrepresented students, helping them navigate their educational paths and achieve their goals.

**Charles Washington, M.S.W.**—Charles Washington brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his role as a counselor and instructor at College of Alameda. His journey began as a part-time Counselor for COA's Brotherhood program, where he demonstrated his commitment to supporting students. Over time, Mr. Washington transitioned to a full-time role as an EOPS counselor while also teaching dual credit courses at McClymonds High School. Throughout his tenure at COA, Charles has held various roles, including counseling support for the men's basketball team, Umoja Counselor/Coordinator, Next Up Counselor, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) transfer coordinator. Notably, he successfully coordinated seven annual HBCU tours, contributing to COA's distinction of having the highest transfer rate to HBCUs in the district. Charles's dedication to expanding students' horizons led him to collaborate with Merritt College on taking 15 COA students to Jamaica for a transformative study abroad experience. After relocating from Houston, Texas, where he served as a Social Work Advisor/practicum coordinator for the University of Houston's School of Social Work, Charles is excited to return to COA and continue making a positive impact on students' lives.

**Marvin Thompson, M.S.**—Marvin's journey is a testament to resilience and determination. Hailing from Pomona, California, he faced numerous challenges growing up, contending with the burden of societal labels that often hindered his belief in his own potential, particularly as a Black male. Despite these obstacles, Marvin emerged as a resilient individual, shaped by the adversities he encountered. After initially dropping out of high school, Marvin later reclaimed his education by earning his General Educational Development Test (GED) at Pomona Adult & Career Education. In 2008, he embarked on his academic journey at Mt. San Antonio College, where he found a supportive environment that laid the groundwork for his success. Marvin's educational pursuits continued at the University of La Verne, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Sociology. Recently, he completed his Master's in Education with an emphasis in College Counseling at the University of Redlands. Marvin is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Educational Leadership at San Francisco State University, driven by his passion for empowering others through education.



## COA to Hold Its First Annual All Classified Professional Development Day

COA Classified Senate **President Kawanna Rollins** and Classified Senate Representative **Jamille Teer** provided outstanding leadership in organizing the College's First Annual All Classified Professional Development Day titled: Learn, Evolve, and Grow!

The inaugural event will be held on Thursday, March 28, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is supported by the Institutional Effectiveness and Partnership Initiative (IEPI) Grant.

All classified employees (Confidential, L39, and SEIU 1021) are invited to attend.