

OPPORTUNITY

NEWS



Photo courtesy of Houston Endowment

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NEWS FROM YOUR COLLEGE

EMS program ranks among state's top 10

San Jacinto College's emergency medical services program has been ranked among the top 10 statewide by the Texas Department of State Health Services Office of EMS/Trauma Systems.

Over three years, San Jac averaged 91% of 181 paramedic and EMT students passing the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam.

Out of 62 statewide programs with both paramedic and EMT graduates, San Jac joins Houston Community, Austin Community, and Tarrant County colleges in the top tier.

With advanced simulation labs, expert faculty, and strong clinical partnerships, San Jac continues to prepare highly skilled EMS professionals ready to serve the greater Houston community and beyond.

Scan the QR code to learn about San Jac's **EMS program**.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College



Photo courtesy of Janna Martin

Six Ravens score big with NJCAA All-Academic recognition

The National Junior College Athletic Association has recognized six San Jacinto College student-athletes for their outstanding academic performance during the spring 2025 season.

Four Ravens earned NJCAA All-Academic First Team honors with perfect 4.0 GPAs:

- Ashleigh Heiderscheit
- Iliana Melendez
- McCabe Moyer
- Emma Pierce

Additionally, Mack Mabrey and Reed Mallett received NJCAA All-Academic Second Team honors for maintaining GPAs between 3.80 and 3.99.

"It was a great year on the field but even more meaningful off the field," said Eric Weaver, head baseball coach. "I'm proud of how our student-athletes excelled in the classroom and made a positive impact through community outreach."

The San Jac softball team also earned Softball Academic Team of the Year honors for maintaining a collective 3.22 GPA.

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac's **athletics**.

"I am so proud of all the student-athletes for their academic accomplishments," said Kelly Saenz, softball head coach. "It is a testament to their hard work and dedication in the classroom."

The NJCAA All-Academic program honors student-athletes who excel in the classroom while competing in collegiate athletics. Honors are awarded in three tiers: First Team, 4.0 GPA; Second Team, 3.80-3.99 GPA; and Third Team, 3.60-3.79 GPA. This year, more than 13,900 NJCAA participants nationwide were recognized for earning a GPA of 3.60 or higher.

These six honorees represent the College's commitment to academic and athletic excellence and reflect San Jac's strong support system and focus on developing well-rounded, high-achieving students.



SAN JAC HAPPENINGS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	SITE
Oct. 14	National Night Out	3:30-6:30 p.m.	Food, games, and community booths Central Campus
Oct. 17	7th Annual Senior Wellness Expo	9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Health resources, food, giveaways, and more Central Campus, LyondellBasell Center for Petrochemical, Energy, & Technology (C45)
Oct. 23-25 & Oct. 30-Nov. 1	"Frogs!"	Varies	Tickets: \$7 South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Blackbox Theatre (\$15.135)
Oct. 27-Nov. 20	"Joe Clark: How to Say I Love You in 200 Words or Less"	Varies	North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1)
Oct. 30	"The Ominous Passage: Pop-up Art Show"	TBA	North Campus Gallery, Grant Fine Arts Center (N1)
Oct. 31	Brass Studio Recital	3 p.m.	Central Campus, Monte Blue Music Building (C5)

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

COLLEGE'S TRAINING PROGRAM TO SUPPORT SPACE-BASED PHARMACEUTICAL RECOVERY

By Jacquelyn Conger
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

San Jacinto College is expanding its leadership in workforce training through a new partnership with Intuitive Machines to develop a biopharmaceutical material handling program, which will prepare technicians to safely manage pharmaceuticals returned from space.

This initiative will support Intuitive Machines' Earth Reentry Program, building on its partnership with America's first commercial space biotech company, Rhodium Scientific. It also marks a major step toward building a commercial pipeline for space-based medication development.

San Jac, Intuitive Machines, and other industry partners will develop

the curriculum from the ground up to align with unique regulatory and technical demands. The training will be built to National Institute for Bioprocessing Research and Training standards, with the College being the only NIBRT-certified institution in the southern U.S.

"With our NIBRT-certified programming, hands-on biotechnology training facilities, and presence at the Houston Spaceport, San Jacinto College is uniquely positioned to lead the development of the workforce needed for space-enabled biomanufacturing," said Dr. Christopher Wild, assistant vice chancellor and vice president of biotechnology.

This initiative builds on San Jac's robust biotechnology program,

which includes a biomanufacturing technology associate degree and certificates. The College recently opened a new Center for Biotechnology at the Generation Park Campus, a first-of-its-kind NIBRT training center to meet the growing demand for bioprocessing professionals across Texas and beyond.

"San Jacinto College understands what it takes to prepare a workforce for next-generation industries," said Justin Kugler, Intuitive Machines senior director of business development. "As we develop a precision Earth return vehicle to deliver space-manufactured materials, the College is training the technicians who will help ensure those scientific payloads — developed by companies like Rhodium Scientific — are safely

received and transferred for use. Their role is essential to making orbital manufacturing commercially viable, connecting what's made in space to what's needed on Earth."

This partnership continues a long-standing relationship with Intuitive Machines, dating back to 2019, and complements a Texas Space Commission-funded project to develop a full-scale ground prototype return vehicle. Approximately 80 students have completed the College's composite manufacturing technician course, and approximately 25% of those have gone on to work at Intuitive Machines.

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac's **biotechnology program**.



FIRST EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION BACHELOR'S DEGREE GRADS SECURE TEACHING POSITIONS

By Jacquelynn Conger
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

This summer, the first seven students graduated from San Jacinto College's Bachelor of Applied Science in education with an emphasis in early childhood education program. In a testament to the program's quality, students' dedication, and regional demand, all seven have already secured teaching positions in the greater Houston area.

"This historic milestone represents San Jacinto College's commitment to addressing the critical need for qualified early childhood educators in our community," said Dr. Albert Talley, San Jac senior director of child development and education programs.

The seven pioneering graduates and their new positions include:

- **Priscilla Alverio**, third grade teacher at Beta Academy
- **Janice Ball**, first grade teacher at Timbers Elementary
- **Patzy Cruz**, fourth grade teacher at Bailey Elementary
- **Maria Cortez**, kindergarten clinical teacher at A.B. Freeman Elementary
- **Bertha Cortez**, early childhood special education/pre-kindergarten clinical teacher at A.B. Freeman Elementary
- **Bianca Gaviria**, second grade ELA/ESL teacher at Gregory-Lincoln Education Center
- **Laquitta Sanders**, lead teacher at Tidwell HeadStart, Harris County Department of Education

The bachelor's degree program addresses the pressing workforce gap in early childhood education. Launched in spring 2024 with support from a \$1.5 million Houston Endowment grant, the program prepares educators to work with children from six weeks through

third grade, with specialized training in early childhood development, curriculum design, and classroom management.

"The instructors at San Jac had such an impact on me," said Cruz. "They didn't just teach me about education — they showed me what it looks like to lead with heart, patience, and purpose."

The program was specifically created for students who have already earned an Associate of Applied Science in early childhood/child development

and are working in the education field. According to the Learning Policy Institute, Texas has the largest teacher workforce of any U.S. state with more than 370,000 teachers, and by 2030, the need for highly qualified early childhood and elementary teachers in Texas is projected to increase by 13%.

The success of this inaugural class underscores San Jac's growing recognition as a leader in teacher training. The College launched this second bachelor's degree program in response to the acute teacher shortage

affecting the Houston-Galveston metro area, where more than 25,000 teaching job postings were reported. The program is part of San Jac's broader commitment to provide accessible, high-quality education that meets the evolving needs of Houston's workforce.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the **Bachelor of Science in early childhood education** program.



Photo by Melissa Trevizo, San Jacinto College

MUSIC SYNCS WORDS AND WELLNESS

By Neesha Hosein
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Dr. Dustin Hixenbaugh makes going above and beyond look harmonious.

The San Jacinto College English professor teaches composition, literature, and humanities. He also serves as co-chair for the district's Hispanic Heritage Month programming committee and recently co-authored an academic paper with Dr. Rhonda Winegar, assistant professor of nursing at the University of Texas at Arlington, titled "Prescribing Music as an Adjunctive Treatment."

Hixenbaugh and Winegar first crossed paths outside of academia.

"Rhonda and I met in Austin — she was my landlady!" he said. "We quickly discovered some shared interests. We were both in graduate school, we both love country music, and we would run into each other at concerts and share listening suggestions."

The two kept in touch after Hixenbaugh relocated to work at San Jac and discussed joining forces for a writing project that played into their areas of expertise.

"Humanities and nursing are pretty different, so it took us time to settle on a topic," he said. "We ran across the annual International Country Music Conference in Nashville and pitched a paper presentation about using country music for music therapy purposes. They accepted us, and we got to work!"

Not his first rodeo

Considering music from a therapeutic angle was a first for Hixenbaugh, though he has experience writing about music.

At the University of Texas at Austin, he taught a Rhetoric of Country Music class and edited a blog where students would report on country music they were experiencing in the Austin area.

Hixenbaugh has also addressed music in other papers and conferences. A few years ago, he wrote a paper for the South Central Modern Language Association conference about how "Mexican Americans pushed back on the way country music whitewashed the image of the cowboy."

On a personal note

Hixenbaugh's life story would be

incomplete without mentioning music as his listening preferences have had a symbolic link to many of his most memorable moments.

"I played clarinet from fourth through 12th grades, concert and marching band," he said. "I have always enjoyed listening to music, especially country music, probably as a result of growing up in Cheyenne, Wyoming."

He values music to reflect or adjust his mood — sad songs when feeling down or upbeat songs when on the road to work. This project helped him realize he unknowingly uses music as therapy.

"For instance, I had to put my dog down and spent the next week listening to Dolly Parton's miserably sad song 'The Grass Is Blue' over and over," he said.

Why is music therapeutic?

Hixenbaugh believes music has a lot of untapped therapeutic potential.

His research with Winegar found that people enjoy positive therapeutic benefits from participating in a variety of activities they enjoy, but music seems to have certain powerful and pervasive qualities overall.

Greater good

Hixenbaugh and Winegar published the article in the *Journal for Nurse Practitioners* hoping it might inspire health care workers to encourage patients to listen to music in targeted, potentially therapeutic ways.

"Nurse practitioners might create a recommended playlist for patients facing certain situations or encourage patients to create their own," Hixenbaugh said.

He supports his students' musical interests, whether they choose to study a particular musician's influence or have discussions about how music has intersected with their lives.

"Last semester, in my Composition II course, two students decided to conduct their own research into how music could be harnessed for mental health benefits," Hixenbaugh said. "I was excited to share our article with them and converse about our common interests."

Though country music was the inspiration, the duo's paper explores music therapy broadly without focusing on genre. Hixenbaugh noted that most

studies have relied on wordless classical music like Mozart, but he personally finds "clear therapeutic benefits from listening to popular music with lyrics and

melodies that are relatable."

The two might team up again to extend their study into how music genre influences therapy.



Photo by Neesha Hosein, San Jacinto College



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HEAD IN THE GAME: PROMISE SCHOLAR JULIAN CARRILLO

By Courtney Morris
SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

Changing schools can be hard. Ask Julian Carrillo.

For his freshman year of high school, Carrillo switched from La Porte Independent School District to First Baptist Christian Academy. Not only did the academic rigor increase, but he felt alone that entire year since his new classmates had practically grown up together.

His sophomore year, tired of feeling lonely, he mustered the courage to approach others.

“I was able to put myself out there and make new friends,” he said. “They became like a second family.”

This fall, Carrillo enrolled at San Jacinto College. But he’s already starting with a can-do attitude about studying and making connections around campus.

“[I like to walk] into every day open-minded ... willing to meet new people,” he said. “Not everyone will come up to you, but you can go up to others.”

After finishing his prerequisite courses, Carrillo will apply for the associate degree nursing program. He also plans to pursue a second associate degree in business so he can become a health care administrator someday.

Nursing runs in the family. His mom, a San Jac alumna, serves as the vice president and chief nursing officer for a hospital system.

As the middle child in a family of six kids, Carrillo has always enjoyed serving others — like helping his grandma, who has memory issues, sort her medications for the day. He’s not sure what kind of nurse he’ll become, though emergency care could be the right fit since he remains calm under pressure.

While Carrillo is still unsure about his exact career plans, one thing he was sure about was pursuing the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship. Open to all high school seniors in San Jac’s taxing district, the scholarship covers full-time tuition and books 100%.

Once determined to attend an out-of-town university, Carrillo pivoted after learning about a debt-free degree at San Jac.

“It seemed smarter to stay home and be with my family,” he said. “Not having any debt after I graduate... that’s always nice to think about in the back of your head, and it’s nice for my family.”

Carrillo enjoys down time — from shooting hoops or hiking in the Texas Hill Country to inventing new fashion statements with friends. But he also knows how to keep his head in the game.

“Hearing how my mom started really inspired me to work harder and take school seriously,” he said. “It showed me that if you work hard, given the right opportunities, you can take off with a career like that.”



Photo by Courtney Morris, San Jacinto College

Apply for Promise @ San Jac Scholarship

Interested in a debt-free degree? If you’re a high school senior living in San Jac’s taxing district, apply for the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship! Here are the deadlines:

- **2/28:** Pledge and apply to San Jac
- **4/30:** Complete the FAFSA or TASFA
- **6/30:** Enroll and register for full-time classes

Scan the QR code to learn more about **Promise**.



THIS MONTH *IN* SOCIAL MEDIA



Facebook

We were saddened to learn that Trustee John Moon Jr. (JR Moon) passed away unexpectedly on July 4. Mr. Moon has served on the San Jacinto College Board of Trustees since 2009. He was passionate about our work and committed to serving our students, employees, and community.

Please keep his wife, Beverly; his mother, Rose; his children and grandchildren; and his many other family members and friends in your prayers.



340 reactions | 57 comments | 61,000 impressions | 3,367 engagements



POV: Poe waiting for students to come back from break



Instagram

Poe is counting the days until campus is full again. Don't forget that registration is open for fall 2025 semester!



399 likes | 10,925 impressions | 468 engagements



LinkedIn

Your new career starts now.

San Jac Online has launched! Select programs and courses are now 100% online — giving you the freedom to learn on your schedule. Whether you're looking for a fresh start, a promotion, or a remote job you can do from home, we're here to help you take the first step.

Fall classes begin Aug. 18, and registration is open now — but don't wait. Spots fill quickly, and this is your moment to move forward.

Because it's never too late to chase your goals. And at San Jac Online, you're never doing it alone.



1 reaction | 104 post-link clicks | 1,056 impressions | 108 engagements



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MARITIME CAMPUS

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VISION & MISSION



Vision — Together with our community members and business and industry partners, San Jacinto College sets the standard for educational excellence, economic growth, and social mobility characterized by innovation and responsiveness.

Mission — We change lives through education, community engagement, and partnerships.

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 ranked second in the nation among more than 1,100 community colleges, as designated by the Aspen Institute, and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, plus an online college, San Jacinto College serves 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.

