

COLLEGE OF
MARIN



MOMENTUM



“It’s a safer time to move forward, and College of Marin is constantly responding to community needs with programs and services tailored to meet the needs of our students. We’ve opened new facilities and if you haven’t been on our campuses in a while, I invite you to explore. There’s something for everyone here; it’s a great place to build momentum for what’s next.”

David Wain Coon, Ed.D.
Superintendent/President

COM Saves Taxpayers Over \$46 Million

In fall 2021, College of Marin (COM) locked in savings for local taxpayers by refinancing existing General Obligation Refunding Bonds (bonds). COM has taken advantage of previous refinancing opportunities since 2012, saving taxpayers over \$34.3 million. The combined savings from refinancing now totals over \$46 million, which will be realized in the form of lower property tax bills.

Prior to the bond sale, Moody’s Investors Service affirmed the College’s perfect ‘Aaa’ credit rating. In its credit report, Moody’s noted COM’s “experienced, fiscally prudent management team which has maintained a stable financial position.”

Superintendent/President David Wain Coon noted, “Marin County taxpayers are the beneficiaries here, and we’re fortunate that our Board of Trustees took quick action when they recognized another opportunity to pass back savings.”

Get Measure B news and updates at measurebcom.org.

Redistricting

In following the California Voting Rights Act and the Elections and Education Codes, the COM Board of Trustees changed the way Trustees are elected. In the past, Trustees were elected “at-large,” where each Trustee was elected by all voters throughout Marin County. Beginning in November 2022, Trustees will be elected by voters from within the area a Trustee would represent. Trustees are also required to live in the area they represent. This type of election, called a By-Trustee-Area election, is to ensure there is better representation for all communities who live within Marin Community College District boundaries.

Inspire the Next Generation

The Bolinas Field Station was opened in 1965 by pioneering professors Drs. Gordon Chan and Al Molina. For over 40 years, the station teamed with students eager to learn and investigate the physical and natural world around them—spawning a lifelong love of the environment. COM is rebuilding the station to inspire a new generation of students who will personally and/or professionally address the issues confronting our collapsing environment. Thanks to a generous donor, we currently have a \$100,000 challenge grant. All gifts will be matched up to \$100,000. Help COM inspire the next generation! Visit advancement.marin.edu.



OUR PRIDE

Barksdale Goes from COM to Broadcasting to Philanthropy

COM alumnus Don Barksdale was one of the first African Americans to break the color barrier and play professionally in the NBA. He is considered one of the most significant alumni to have attended the College.

In June 2020, COM's Board of Trustees made a unanimous decision to name the basketball court at the Kentfield Campus after the renowned alum. The pandemic delayed the celebration for almost two years because of limitations and safety concerns for inside gatherings. On April 29, 2022, COM's Umoja Equity Institute, COM Athletics, Play! Marin, and Associated Students of College of Marin (ASCOM) cosponsored the naming ceremony.

After his basketball career ended from an ankle injury in 1955, Barksdale went on to become a successful Bay Area radio host and pioneering entrepreneur well into the 1980s. In the 80s, he founded Save High School Sports, a successful nonprofit organization in Oakland that helped support local athletics threatened by a budget crunch.

Barksdale is the only COM athlete inducted into the Community College League of California COA Hall of Fame. Enshrined three years after his death in 1996, he joined the likes of Jackie Robinson, Warren Moon, and Valerie Brisco-Hooks. In 2007, he was inducted into the Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame.



UMOJA UNITY

umojatm
community

Umoja is a Kiswahili word meaning unity. COM's Umoja program originally grew from an unofficial mentoring project started two decades ago by faculty members Rinetta Early, Walter Turner, and Rose Thompson (retired) to help students of color who were having a difficult time navigating COM and the college system.

The plan was simple. Professor Turner would connect students he thought needed more guidance with Professor Early. In her role as counselor, Early assisted students with financial aid applications, discussed how the college system works, and gave them tips on how to advocate for themselves. They soon noticed how effective this was in helping students reach their academic goals.

Many other California community colleges at the time offered either unofficial support networks like this for African American students or official ones through Black Student Unions and clubs, working individually to create programs and services for their students.

In 2006, the statewide Umoja Community started to unify—not only the colleges—but curriculum, funding, and resources for these programs. It gave colleges a statewide network and framework to help their students succeed.

The statewide Umoja Community brought a unifying message to the student support groups and established a learning community for the students within it. Thanks to Turner, Early, and Bonnie Borenstein, Ph.D. (retired), COM joined the statewide Umoja Program in 2015.

COM's Umoja program is designed to increase the retention, success, and graduation rates of African American students, and especially those who are first-generation college students. The program also encompasses all students who support the principles and goals of the Umoja Community.





Creating Belonging

One of COM Umoja's core components is a learning cohort of students who go through an English and a counseling class together. Because students stay together while studying the same materials and being in the same classrooms, it builds their social interactions and develops a strong sense of place.

Alum d'Artagnan Connor III was part of COM Umoja's very first learning cohort in 2015.

"The Umoja cohort had two parts," Connor recalls. "Tonya Hersch's English class led into Troy Stevenson's counseling class, giving us information on how the college system really works. For the first time, college got interesting to me, because we weren't just doing regular English. We're reading about different African American innovators, professionals, and highlighting different stories. And because I was in the cohort, Troy was always our guaranteed counselor where I got to establish that relationship from the beginning."

Professor Troy Stevenson says the Umoja faculty would often see where d'Artagnan was as a way to check in on how well the program was running. "When we saw d'Artagnan succeed, we knew Umoja was succeeding."

"...college got interesting to me, because we weren't just doing regular English. We're reading about different African American innovators, professionals, and highlighting different stories."

- d'Artagnan Connor

One of the cornerstones of an educational learning community is dedicated academic counselors. They talk with students about their goals and create a pathway to help them meet those goals successfully.

Counselors find out about a student's history and can recommend different types of financial aid, scholarships, and support services. They discuss transferring to universities, how to change a major, how many classes to take, stress and mental health, and so much more.

When this is brought into a learning community like Umoja, it offers even more specialized support for students. COM Umoja alumna Topaz Wells acknowledges just how true this was for her and Umoja Counselor Rinetta Early.

"If I didn't have Rinetta, I don't think I would have done this. She motivates you... it was so nice to have someone to communicate with who was my advocate, my counselor, and also a friend. She really helped me succeed." - Topaz Wells

TRANSFER

From COM to West Point



This year, College of Marin's baseball team broke the College's 1985 record of 37 team home runs to 47 set by the 2022 team. Recent COM graduate Jack Morken contributed with five of those home runs, tying for the third highest home run record on the team.

Thanks to his talent at the plate, his desire to serve his country, and COM Baseball Coach Steve Berringer initiating an introduction to the academy, Morken transferred to the United States Military Academy (USMA), also known as West Point, in late June for basic training.

"He [Coach Berringer] helped me so much to get to the next level, which is part of the gig as a junior college coach. Not only do you want to develop players and have great relationships with them, but you also want to get them to the next level. As I see it, he couldn't have done it any better for me."

- Jack Morken



Furthering Careers in STEM

In spring 2022, COM students Dawne Abdul Al-Bari and Isela Sosa attended the American Physical Society Conference for Undergraduate Women in Physics (CUWiP) at UCSC. During the conference, they learned how to further their careers in STEM fields.

"The community, the inclusive attitudes and the resources devoted to students at pennies on the dollar are well worth the time invested in developing a well-balanced foundation in both the arts and sciences," says Abdul Al-Bari.

Sosa, an immigrant from El Salvador, said COM instilled in her the belief that she could go to college and better her life for herself and her children.

"When I was in my country, I did not want to go to school because I believed that I was a bad student," she said. "At COM, I'm discovering that I'm actually a good student, and I can still dream for a better future even though I'm not in my 20s anymore."



Journey to Prep Médico

COM student Elizabeth Avalos participated in the summer 2022 Prep Médico internship program. Avalos is currently studying nursing at COM and she is the first person in her immediate family to pursue a career in medicine.

The Prep Médico program is specifically designed to encourage and support the Latinx community to excel within the medical field. Currently, the Latinx community accounts for almost 40 percent of California's population but makes up less than 5 percent of physicians.

COM initiatives promoting the Latinx community's advancement in higher education were a significant selling point for Avalos. "Before 2019, I was not familiar with College of Marin, but I knew that I wanted to go somewhere local with a good reputation," said Avalos. "After some research, I knew that COM was my institution."

In 2021, Avalos heard a Prep Médico representative talk about the opportunities interns would receive in their program. Shortly after, Avalos was interviewed by Chemistry Professor Paul Daubenmire, Ph.D.

"I knew that Elizabeth would be a great candidate for this opportunity. She was already completing her nursing prerequisites, she had personal experiences that fueled her passion, and her prior work experience exposed her to the realization that she wanted to give back to her community," said Daubenmire.

Professor Daubenmire's mentorship had a big impact on her application experience. "The application process can be intimidating and reminiscent of applying to university," Avalos recalled. "It's a big deal when someone like Paul has faith in you." Avalos encourages future students to keep moving forward through challenges they may encounter on their educational journey.



"Never get discouraged. No one can limit you on what you can achieve."

- Elizabeth Avalos

PREPARATION

Inspiring Students to be Upstanders with Courage and Grace

COM hosted award-winning Chilean author Isabel Allende in spring 2022 for an onstage interview by English Professor Dave King.

The event was presented by COM's shared reading program and year-long reading festival to celebrate the joy of reading and bring the College community together around a single book. This year's featured readings included Allende's *The Stories of Eva Luna* and her 2019 novel, *A Long Petal of the Sea*.

"For our COMmon Read selections, we choose authors who will inspire our students. And since our College student body is over 30 percent Latinx, she was a natural choice," said COM Librarian David Patterson, Ph.D. "This entire year, we've been studying, reading, and discussing Ms. Allende's recent novel, *A Long Petal of the Sea*, to understand how people behave when democracy is threatened."

Murals are a Legacy of AHO's Lasting Partnership with COM

COM is now the permanent home of a highly-celebrated traveling mural series, designed and created by the Ambassadors of Hope and Opportunity (AHO) Youth Leadership Team. AHO was founded by Executive Director Zara Babitzke, M.A. to serve non-system, at-risk, homeless, and sex-trafficked young people.

Babitzke said the youth selected COM because of the alignment between the College's values and AHO's mission; both focusing on community partnerships, diversity, equity, inclusion and education.



"The Youth Team wanted to leave a legacy of AHO with COM as a permanent home for the murals because of our shared values," Babitzke said. "AHO is transforming lives and building youth leaders and demonstrating the power of youth to transform their circumstances to become future leaders..."

About 75 percent of the more than 3,800 youth AHO has successfully served have attended or graduated from COM before moving on to a university or into the workforce.

