



Lamar Community College President's April 2025 Report

President – Dr. Rosana Reyes

Economic Mobility

SBDC Opens Second Location at LCC to Support Student and Community Success

On April 15th, Lamar Community College (LCC) hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the Southeast Colorado Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) second location. This expansion strengthens LCC's commitment to supporting students, entrepreneurs, and the local economy.

The new SBDC office enhances access to business planning, financial guidance, and entrepreneurial resources—tools that align with the Colorado Community College System's goal of offering relevant programs that help learners earn sustaining wages.

By embedding this resource within the college, LCC continues to promote its mission of preparing students for employment or educational transfer. This partnership is expected to support key institutional goals: increasing graduate placement in local industry, boosting enrollment in workforce-aligned programs, and improving transfer rates.

The addition of this second SBDC location positions LCC as a vital hub for economic mobility and real-world opportunity in the region.



Education for All

Lamar Community College Hosts Senior Days and Middle School Fair to Support Student Success and Access

In April, Lamar Community College (LCC) welcomed students from across the region for two major outreach events—Senior Days and the inaugural Middle School Fair. Both events were designed to introduce students to college programs, support services, and the many opportunities available through LCC.

Senior Days brought high school seniors to campus for an admissions and concurrent enrollment experience that included interactive sessions on academic programs, financial aid, scholarships, student life, and dual enrollment options. Similarly, the Middle School Fair offered younger students a hands-on opportunity to explore career pathways, meet faculty and staff, and learn what college can offer in an engaging and age-appropriate setting.

These events provided personalized and welcoming experiences, helping students at different stages of their educational journey connect with LCC in meaningful ways. By fostering early and continued engagement, LCC supports students in building confidence and clarity about their future academic and career goals.

Both the Senior Days and Middle School Fair directly support the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal of creating equitable, learner-centered environments that empower all students to meet their goals. These initiatives also align with LCC's commitment to providing individualized service and a well-rounded academic experience to all students.

Importantly, these outreach efforts contribute to LCC's strategic goal of reducing achievement gaps and improving success rates for historically underserved student populations. By engaging students early and consistently, LCC is helping to ensure that learners from all backgrounds begin their educational journeys informed, inspired, and supported.





Lamar Community College Launches Golden Zonta Club to Empower Student Leaders and Promote Equity

Lamar Community College (LCC) is proud to announce the launch of the Golden Zonta Club, a new student organization sponsored on campus as part of the international Zonta Club network. The club's mission is to build a better world for women and girls through service, advocacy, and education—aligning closely with LCC's and the Colorado Community College System's commitment to equity and student support.

Zonta Clubs around the world engage in meaningful service projects, leadership development, and community outreach to advance gender equality and human rights. At LCC, the Golden Z Club provides students with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, engage in service learning, and become agents of positive change—both on campus and in the community.

This new club directly supports the CCCS goal of increasing equitable, learner-centered environments by giving all students, particularly women and underrepresented populations, a platform to lead and succeed. Through mentorship, advocacy initiatives, and collaboration with local Zonta chapters, members are empowered to meet their educational and personal goals.

LCC Launches Title V Aspira Program with Student Celebration

Lamar Community College recently hosted a vibrant kickoff event to introduce its new Title V Aspira Program, a federally funded initiative designed to support and increase access, persistence, and success for Hispanic and Pell-eligible students in the four-county region surrounding LCC.

The evening celebration, held at LCC's newest residential location—Main Street Housing, welcomed over 100 students for a night of community-building, featuring local food vendors,

games, music, and meaningful conversations. LCC Success Coaches shared information about the goals of the Aspira Program and gathered valuable student feedback to help shape future programming.

This event marked the first of many opportunities for students to engage with Aspira's mission: to provide equitable, learner-centered support that helps students not only succeed but thrive throughout their academic journey. A key priority of the program is to foster deeper connections with younger students in the area and strengthen relationships between local families and the college.

Aspira directly supports the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal of increasing equity and learner-centered environments, while aligning with LCC's commitment to providing individualized service that helps all students reach their goals through a rigorous, well-rounded academic experience.

Empowered Talent

Welcome Yaniel Vidal – Assistant Men's Basketball Coach

Yaniel Vidal is originally from Holly, Colorado. Following a successful college basketball career at Otero Junior College and Lincoln University (MO), he began pursuing opportunities in entrepreneurship and coaching. After spending time in Kansas City, he joined PGU Hoops, a national AAU basketball organization with over 10 teams across the country.

A family situation brought Yaniel back to Colorado, where a door opened for him to begin coaching. Now proudly calling Lamar Community College (LCC) home, he has embraced the opportunity to coach and serve the community, regularly taking youth teams to tournaments across the state.



As he continues to build his coaching career, Yaniel is also dedicated to supporting his wife through nursing school and plans to pursue a graduate degree himself. While his on-court experience has equipped him for his current role, it is the life lessons and personal growth off the court that he values most in guiding young athletes to grow both as players and as individuals.

Welcome Ryan McGee – Assistant Men's Soccer Coach

Ryan is a Junior College product rising from Dakota County Technical College in his hometown to playing professionally around the world, most recently playing in the New Zealand Premier League with Bay Olympic. Ryan brings a wealth of experience as both a player and coach.



Starting his career at two Top 10 ranked Juco Programs Dakota County Technical College and Santa Barbara City College. He then transferred to the University of Antelope Valley and Marymount California University where his team reached the NAIA Final 4. During this time in Los Angeles while playing semiprofessionally in USL2 Ryan would sign with @chivas U-23 and play some of the best teams from around the world in exhibition matches. Ryan used this as a platform to sign with a team in Australia's National Premier League.

As a coach Ryan comes to us most recently from his hometown of Minneapolis where he was the Assistant Coach at North Central University. While in

Minneapolis Ryan also coached a competitive Semi-Professional Team at Vloria FC in the UPSL recruiting top college players from around the country.

Ryan also brings extensive recruiting experience spending several years as a coordinator helping place top players from foreign academies at major universities in the states while also creating platforms for American players to go abroad. Ryan also coached professional academies for the teams he played for while abroad.

He had this to say about his decision to come to Lamar: "I am passionate about helping players who may have been overlooked or non-NCAA qualifiers and providing a platform for them to develop and transfer to top universities."

In his free time Coach enjoys Hiking, Surfing, Snowboarding and ancient history.

CCCS Celebrates Employee Excellence and Dedication to Student Success

The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) hosted its ninth annual *Commitment to Excellence Awards* ceremony at the History Colorado Center, recognizing more than 50 exceptional employees from across the state's 13 community colleges and the CCCS System Office. The event honored faculty, instructors, and staff who have made significant contributions to student success and community impact.

"Community colleges provide transformative education and training experiences for Coloradans who need it most," said CCCS Chancellor Joe Garcia. "That mission is powered by the incredible faculty, instructors, and staff who demonstrate true dedication and teamwork in everything they do."

Lamar Community College (LCC) was honored to recognize four outstanding team members during the ceremony:

- Annissia Forney, Library Director and Tutoring Coordinator – *Administrative Employee of the Year*

- Dr. Brian Gauck, Agriculture Instructor – *Faculty of the Year*
- Cheryl Sanchez, Business Adjunct Faculty – *Adjunct Faculty of the Year*
- Armando Hernandez, Custodian – *Classified Employee of the Year*



This year's event carried deep emotion for the LCC community, as they honored Armando Hernandez posthumously following a tragic incident that claimed his life earlier in the year. In a heartfelt moment, his mother, Josephine Tirado, attended the luncheon and accepted his award on his behalf. Armando's unwavering dedication, kind spirit, and hard work left a lasting impact on the college, and his presence is deeply missed.

The Commitment to Excellence Awards reflects CCCS's goal of attracting, retaining, and sustaining the highest quality workforce to advance its mission. At LCC, they also reinforce the college's ongoing commitment to being the *employer of choice in Southeast Colorado*, where every employee is valued and celebrated for the meaningful role they play in student achievement and community enrichment.

Golden Egg Hunt Brings Fun and Connection to LCC Employees

Lamar Community College (LCC) recently hosted a *Golden Egg Hunt*, a lighthearted and energizing event organized by the Employee Engagement Committee. Designed to bring faculty and staff together, the event offered a fun break from the workday and a chance to build camaraderie across departments.



Participants searched the campus for the coveted golden egg, which offered special prizes. Events like this are part of a larger initiative by the Employee Engagement group to provide both professional development and meaningful moments of connection throughout the year.

The Golden Egg Hunt supports the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal to attract, retain, and sustain a high-quality workforce by fostering a positive, inclusive, and engaging campus culture. It also reinforces LCC's commitment to being the employer of choice in Southeast Colorado—where employees feel valued, connected, and supported both personally and professionally.

Partner of Choice

LCC Student Elianna Velez Receives Shirley Rosengrants Memorial Scholarship

LCC student Elianna Velez is the 2024–2025 recipient of the Shirley Rosengrants Memorial Scholarship, which supports students in the Nursing Program. Elianna recently delivered a Breast Cancer Awareness presentation in the LCC Large Lecture Hall, emphasizing the significance of early detection.

The scholarship was established by 1978 LCC graduate Kathleen Schmidtke and the Hewlett-Packard Matching Gifts Program in memory of Shirley Rosengrants, who passed away from breast cancer in 2000. Schmidtke created a scholarship to honor Shirley's memory and promote breast cancer awareness.



The \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to a Prowers County student willing to present a breast cancer awareness project. Schmidtke aims to raise awareness, particularly in rural areas with limited access to medical information, to encourage early detection and intervention.

Elianna's presentation highlights the scholarship's impact and the importance of raising awareness about breast cancer. Through her work, Elianna honors Shirley's memory and educates others about this critical issue.



LCC Christian Club Yahweh Today Hosts a Joint Community-Wide Easter Sunday Service with the Unified Pastors Alliance

On Easter Sunday, April 20, Lamar Community College (LCC) opened its doors to the Southeast Colorado community for a powerful celebration of faith, unity, and renewal. Hosted by LCC's student organization, the *Yahweh Today Christian Club*, in collaboration with the *Unified Pastors Alliance*, the Easter Sunday Service welcomed over 100 attendees from across the region.

The service brought together members from seven different church congregations, highlighting the spirit of togetherness and shared belief. Attendees participated in heartfelt worship, prayer, and messages of hope that resonated across generations and backgrounds.

Held on the LCC campus, the event showcased the college as a center of not only academic growth but also community connection and spiritual support. Events like this exemplify LCC's commitment to inclusivity and student-led engagement, as well as its ongoing goal to be the higher education partner of choice in Southeast Colorado.

By fostering cross-community collaboration and encouraging student involvement in meaningful initiatives, the Easter Sunday Service reflected the strong partnership between faith, education, and service—an embodiment of LCC's vibrant and welcoming campus culture.



Lamar Community College Hosts Harlem Wizards Game in Partnership with Lamar Shriners

Lamar Community College (LCC) recently welcomed the high-energy entertainment of the Harlem Wizards to campus for a packed, fun-filled night at the LCC Wellness Center. Sponsored by the Lamar Shriners organization, the event drew a full crowd of families, students, and community members for an evening of basketball tricks, comedy, and community connection.

The Harlem Wizards game not only provided memorable entertainment but also showcased the strong partnership between LCC and local civic organizations like the Shriners. With a mission focused on philanthropy, community service, and supporting children's health and well-being, the Shriners Club brings people together to raise funds for good causes and foster community spirit—making them a natural partner for this high-profile event.

This collaboration directly supports the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal of increasing trust and capability with partners across all sectors to promote shared prosperity. It also reinforces LCC's goal of being the *higher education and workforce development partner of choice in Southeast Colorado*, strengthening community ties and increasing the number of community-hosted events on campus.

By opening its doors for events like the Harlem Wizards game, LCC continues to cultivate a vibrant campus environment that benefits both students and the surrounding community—fostering engagement, collaboration, and shared celebration.

LCC Student-Athletes Give Back to the Community Through Service Projects

Student-athletes from Lamar Community College have been stepping off the field and into the community, volunteering their time and talents with local organizations and initiatives throughout Southeast Colorado. Representing Volleyball, Men's and Women's Basketball, Baseball, Softball, and Men's and Women's Soccer, these exemplary students have made a positive impact across the region dedicating over 220 hours to volunteerism in the community.

In recent weeks, LCC athletes have participated in a wide range of service projects, including reading to children at the Lamar Public Library, playing and mentoring kids at the Head Start program, supporting staff and families at the Hope Center, and helping clean up Willow Creek Park. In celebration of Earth Day, teams also joined efforts to plant trees, contributing to environmental sustainability and beautification in the local community.

These acts of service are more than just one-time events—they reflect LCC's ongoing commitment to being a partner of choice in Southeast Colorado, as outlined in its institutional goals. Hosting and participating in community-based efforts helps LCC increase its presence and engagement with local organizations, strengthening partnerships across all sectors and supporting the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal of building trust, credibility, and shared prosperity.



Power of 13

LCC Construction Trades Program Celebrates Successful Home Sale on Memorial Drive

Lamar Community College's Construction Trades program recently celebrated the successful sale of its student-built home on Memorial Drive, marking another milestone in hands-on learning and workforce development. The house was constructed entirely by students in the program, giving them real-world experience in residential construction, project planning, and teamwork.

A substantial majority of the proceeds from the sale—more than 95% after closing costs—was reinvested directly into the program. This reinvestment ensures that future students will have access to quality tools, materials, and training facilities as they prepare for careers in the growing construction industry.

This project exemplifies the Colorado Community College System's (CCCS) goal of leveraging college strengths to improve quality and achieve cost efficiency through collaboration and shared opportunity. At LCC, it reflects our continued commitment to offering trademark programs that expand student access and contribute to the regional economy, while also supporting facility growth and program sustainability.

As LCC looks to expand capacity in housing and career and technical education programs by 2030, successful projects like the Memorial Drive home demonstrate the powerful impact of experiential learning and strategic reinvestment. The Construction Trades program continues to serve as a model of how education can directly benefit both students and the community.

