

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

April 2025



## Crafton Hills College Hosts 2nd Annual STEM Summit, Inspiring Future Scientists and Innovators



On February 21, Crafton Hills College hosted the 2nd Annual STEM Summit in partnership with Redlands Unified School District. This event introduces high school juniors and seniors to STEM programs at

Crafton, showcasing the College's hands-on, innovative approach to learning—whereby students engage in real-world applications of STEM concepts.

This year, over 60 RUSD students participated in interactive breakout sessions exploring various STEM disciplines, including mathematics, anthropology, and microbiology.

In addition to these hands-on sessions, students attended a MESA student panel featuring five CHC students. The panel provided an opportunity for juniors and seniors to ask questions about the college experience, offering valuable insights into what their own academic journey could look like in just two years.

The event was filled with innovation, learning, and inspiration. RUSD chaperones shared enthusiastic feedback, expressing their excitement for next year's summit.

*Photo: RUSD students in microbiology lab.*

## CHC Students and Staff Attend A2MEND 18th Annual Summit



On March 6-7, a group of eight students and five staff members from Crafton Hills College attended the 18th Annual A2MEND Summit at the Hyatt Regency LAX. The conference provided a powerful space for students to connect, learn, and be inspired.

Students took full advantage of networking opportunities, especially with peers from four-year universities, helping them build relationships for a smoother transfer

experience. Being in a space with others who shared similar backgrounds fostered a strong sense of community and belonging.

The summit reinforced CHC's commitment to equity and student success, equipping attendees with knowledge and connections that will support their academic and personal growth.

*Photo: CHC students on their way to the A2MEND Summit.*



## Author Nalo Hopkinson Provides a Glimpse into the Mind of the Artist



Crafton Hills College continued to celebrate Black History month on February 20, with the appearance of author, artist, and Professor of Creative Writing at U.C. Riverside Nalo Hopkinson.

Dressed casually and seated in an old easy chair with a small table at its side, Hopkinson succeeded in creating an atmosphere of intimacy with her audience in the College's Performing Arts Center. She briefly recounted her career as a science fiction/fantasy writer, beginning with a workshop in Canada, where she met Octavia Butler, author of *The Fledgling* (2007) and other highly acclaimed novels. She and Butler maintained their close friendship, and

Hopkins continued to attend writers' workshops and develop her creative skills.

Her breakthrough as a professional writer occurred when she submitted three chapters of a novel in a publisher's writing contest. When she was chosen as a finalist, she was asked to submit her entire novel for judgment. This seeming triumph posed a problem: she had written only the chapters she submitted. Undeterred, she wrote furiously until the final date of submission. Amazingly, she won the contest and went on from there to work with an agent and become a professional writer.

She also explained the importance of

her upbringing in Jamaica in her artistic development, including the influence of her parents. Her father was a writer and her mother a librarian. She was encouraged to read, especially classics such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, and learn about the foods she saw when her mother took her to the market.

In addition to writing, Hopkinson creates art in other media, including pieces incorporating fabrics and painting that emphasize her Caribbean heritage, examples of which she presented on PowerPoint.

The session ended with Hopkins answering questions from the audience, mostly about her methods of writing stories and novels. She stressed that what works for her may not work for others since creativity relies on individual preferences. She explained that some days she might write just one sentence; other days she will write thousands of words. She also revealed that she has had to overcome ADHD, autism, and fibro neuralgia.

The audience left with an understanding of what goes into the act of creating art.

*Photo: Nalo Hopkinson with attendees.*

## Crafton Hills College Partners with Yucaipa High for Senior Takeover Event



On February 26, Crafton Hills College's Outreach and Marketing teams collaborated for a special Yucaipa High School Takeover event, designed to help seniors commit to their next step—enrolling at CHC.

Students had the opportunity to complete key steps in the matriculation process, ensuring a smooth transition to college. Outreach staff guided them through application and enrollment steps, answering questions and providing support.

Meanwhile, Marketing created an engaging atmosphere, complete with CHC branding, giveaways, and photo opportunities with

Ryker, the college's beloved mascot.

The event was a success, reinforcing CHC's commitment to making higher education accessible and exciting for local students. By the end of the day, many YHS seniors had taken their first official step toward becoming Roadrunners.

When they begin classes in the fall of 2025, these Yucaipa High School graduates will gain access to affordable, high-quality education, transfer pathways, and career training—all while staying close to home.

*Photo: YHS student poses with Ryker.*

## Celebrating a Legacy: Bill Ahlborn's 100 Years of Learning, Teaching, and Giving



On March 8, Crafton Hills College representatives celebrated the 100th birthday of alumnus and beloved educator Bill Ahlborn. Bill first joined CHC as a student in 1980, later becoming a faculty member. After his retirement, his passion for learning led him to a second career teaching at community colleges, universities, and even on cruise ships.

Bill's impact at CHC has been profound. He was a keynote speaker at Foundation events, honored as Alumnus of the Year in 2020, and recognized in 2022 with

the naming of the Bill and Paula Ahlborn Courtyard. His generosity extends to scholarships for Earth Science students, helping them present research at national conferences.

As we celebrate Bill's milestone birthday, we honor his lasting contributions to education and his unwavering support of students. Happy 100th, Bill!

*Photo: Carrie Audet, Bill Ahlborn, and Michelle Riggs.*

## Artlands Exhibition Provides Engaging Visitor Experience



The Artlands exhibition held an interactive reception with four of the participating artists on March 5 in the Craton Hills College art gallery. A crowd of students and community members were treated to numerous engaging works from seven artists and heard from the artists themselves about what inspired them and how they worked on their respective creations.

The program began with CHC Art Professor Yuki Toyooka Smith providing information about the exhibition and introducing the artists. Each explained their motivation for creating art and commented on their techniques.

Featured artist Zara Kand displayed the most pieces. Her two human-like figures shrouded in clouds hang from the gallery ceiling facing each other. Kand's oil paintings show people and landscapes that at first appear ordinary but include symbols that introduce a sense of mystery or spirituality and create moods that grow in complexity the more one looks at them. Along with these pieces are works by six other artists.

The exhibit will run until March 28. More artwork is on display at The Artlands Creative gallery at 18 E. Vine Street in Redlands.

*Photo: Artland's Exhibition.*

## 10th Annual ASL Educators Collaboration Conference: A Milestone in Inclusive ASL Education



On March 1, Crafton Hills College and San Bernardino Valley College proudly co-hosted the 10th Annual ASL Educators

Collaboration Conference at San Bernardino Valley College. This milestone event was the largest yet, with 120 registered participants and five dedicated student volunteers.

The conference featured five workshop sessions across three tracks, offering a total of 14 presentations led by faculty from institutions throughout California. While most attendees were from within the state, there were several out-of-state participants. Notably, the registration website received international engagement, highlighting the growing global interest in ASL education and the conference.

A key highlight of this year's event was the strong emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in ASL pedagogy. It was inspiring to see educators collectively committed to fostering inclusive learning environments that prioritize accessibility and representation.

The high level of engagement and scholarly exchange underscored a shared dedication to advancing ASL education and ensuring equitable language access for diverse communities.

*Photo: Attendees at ASL Conference.*



## Crafton Hills College Alumni and Students Shine in the Performing Arts



Crafton Hills College students and alumni are making their mark on stage and behind the scenes, proving that CHC's theatre arts program builds a strong foundation for careers in the arts.

At Revolution Stage Company in Palm Springs, students Meagan Lawson, Arthur

Buenaventura, and Lailani Baldwin starred in *Spring Awakening: The Musical*, captivating audiences with their performances. Meanwhile, at the Yucaipa Performing Arts Center, alumni Sophie Ball, Andromeda Dunlop, and Jacob Brantmeyer thrive in technical theater roles, showcasing the magic behind the scenes.

Beyond Yucaipa, Sebastian Hernandez advances his career as a technician at Morongo Casino Resort & Spa. At the California Theatre of the Performing Arts, Elijah Lozano and Olivia Jacques shined in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and *Matilda*, while *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* currently features Lozano as Peter, Sidney Pulido as the White Witch, and Alyssa Lindemann as a Creature of Light.

Crafton talent is also taking the stage

at Riverside Community Players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Tristan Clift as Demetrius, Kobe Darby as Lysander, and Bella Spelman as a Faerie. At Wolverine Con, Roe McCarty screened his short film *Pit*, starring CHC students Jonathan Gill and Ismael Sanchez.

CHC alumni are also excelling behind the scenes—Diedra Cohen works as an assistant lighting designer, while Alex Skousen recently joined the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE).

These talented students and graduates exemplify the exceptional preparation CHC provides for careers in the performing arts.

*Photo: Megan Lawson and Arthur Buenaventura on stage in Palm Springs.*

## Crafton Hills College Professor's Artwork Selected for Prestigious L.A. Exhibition



Renée Azenaro, Associate Professor of Visual & Multimedia Arts at Crafton Hills College, had her mixed media painting "seep/crust" selected for the L.A. Open exhibition in January at the TAG Gallery in Los Angeles. This prestigious annual exhibition highlights a diverse range of artistic talent, showcasing the works of 100 artists chosen from over 700 submissions.

TAG Gallery, an artist-owned cooperative, has been a part of the Los Angeles art

scene since 1993. Located in the vibrant Miracle Mile district, the gallery is known for promoting emerging and established artists through curated exhibitions, fostering an inclusive space for contemporary art. The L.A. Open serves as a platform for artists from various backgrounds to gain visibility and connect with the broader art community.

*Photo: "seep/crust" by Renée Azenaro.*

## Grad Fest at Crafton Hills College



On February 26, CHC was filled with energy as students attended Grad Fest. They submitted graduation applications, picked up milestone pins, and ordered their caps and gowns.

The event featured food, photos, and music, creating a lively atmosphere. At the counseling booth, advisors provided final grad checks, ensuring students were on track. With everything in place, students left feeling confident and ready for their

upcoming graduation.

Students must submit their graduation application and RSVP by May 5 to participate in the Commencement Ceremony. The 2025 Commencement will take place on May 23 at 5 p.m. in the campus quad. More information is available at [craftonhills.edu/grad](http://craftonhills.edu/grad).

*Photo: CHC student poses for photo at Grad Fest.*