

► SUMMER 2026

NEWSLETTER



RECONNECTING HUNDREDS OF ALUMNI

ROADRUNNER ROLL CALL

ALSO INSIDE: _____

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT Michelle Blomquist

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT Ryan Bartlett

2026 COMMENCEMENT Another record-breaking year

SHE NEVER STOPPED *Showing Up*

**Her journey began at Crafton – and
her impact continues at the Redlands
Unified School District.**



RAPID-FIRE QUESTIONS WITH MICHELLE BLOMQUIST

COFFEE OR TEA?

NEITHER. MY DRINK OF
CHOICE IS
USUALLY WATER.

YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

CALVIN AND HOBBS

FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT?

ITALY

**ONE WORD THAT DESCRIBES
YOUR CAREER JOURNEY?**

REWARDING

**BEST ADVICE YOU'VE
EVER RECEIVED?**

EVERY DAY IS BRAND NEW,
MAKE THE MOST
OF IT.

**EARLY BIRD OR
NIGHT OWL?**

NIGHT OWL

**A HOBBY OR ACTIVITY YOU
ENJOY OUTSIDE OF WORK?**

SCRAPBOOKING/CARD
MAKING.

**WHAT IS ONE THING PEOPLE
MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO
LEARN ABOUT YOU?**

I WAS BORN IN KENYA.

**IF YOU COULD HAVE DINNER
WITH ANY PERSON, PAST
OR PRESENT, WHO WOULD
IT BE?**

I AM PRIMARILY OF ITALIAN
DESCENT, SO I WOULD LOVE
TO EAT WITH MY NONNA'S. I
MISS THEM BOTH.

**WHAT MAKES YOU PROUD
TO BE A CRAFTON HILLS
COLLEGE ALUMNA?**

LOOKING AT MY DIPLOMA
AND KNOWING THAT MY
JOURNEY INTO MY CAREER
STARTED THERE.

Michelle Blomquist has shown up for students for well over three decades. Her own educational journey began at Crafton Hills College.

Blomquist attended Crafton from 1987 to 1989, focusing on mathematics while completing the general education coursework she needed to transfer to a four-year university. She went on to earn her degrees from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and the University of Redlands, but she has never forgotten where she started. "Crafton provided an invaluable starting point in my educational and professional journey. It paved the road to the opportunities I experienced thereafter."

There is one particular memory of her time at Crafton that stands out. "Señor Gonzales made learning a second language fun. He truly cared for his students. "The type of positive influence he displayed during her Spanish classes has stayed with her, and she has attempted to replicate this influence during her educational career.

Following graduation, Blomquist became a substitute teacher in Redlands. Later, she received a call offering her a full-time teaching contract for a fifth-sixth combination class at Crafton Elementary School. She remained at Crafton Elementary for 14 years before helping to open Judson & Brown Elementary School in 2006. At Judson & Brown Elementary School, she taught first grade for 11 years. At some point, Michelle decided to pursue a goal she had long considered.

"My original intention was to become a High School Guidance Counselor to assist students in determining their future plans by assisting them in selecting colleges and trade schools and/or applying for jobs," she said. "However, I did not know when that opportunity would present itself, or if working in high school was the correct fit for me." When Redlands Unified School District identified a need for Elementary School Counselors, the timing seemed appropriate for Michelle.

"The experiences gained through 25 years of teaching in an elementary classroom created the foundation for my counseling role. This was a logical transition point in my career to take the risk; it has been incredibly rewarding, and I appreciate the opportunity."

She was part of the first group of Elementary School Counselors in the district, and the work has reinforced everything she believed

about why kindness has to be at the center of education.

"Some students are more challenging than others to teach, but they also may be dealing with more trauma or other situations that we are unaware of," she said. "But that doesn't mean we give up on them. It means we work harder to help them. Kindness toward every student is vital. There is no way to really know or understand what may be happening in their lives."

Over the years, Blomquist has been honored as both Teacher of the Year and Counselor of the Year. She is grateful for both, but clear-eyed about what the work is actually for. "It is always an honor to be recognized for doing the job that I love," she said. "It also reassured me that I was still making a difference in students' and families' lives. But teachers and counselors do not work for awards. We work to make the students' academic and often, life journey a success."

What keeps her going are the moments that remind her why she started. "Seeing students excited about learning and knowing that I have helped a student learn to solve problems on their own

makes me feel proud," she said. "That is what educators get to do. We prepare our students to be independent problem solvers. I love meeting students after they have graduated, and they let me know the impact I had on their lives."

Her connection to Crafton has grown stronger over time, not weaker. Many of her own former students have gone on to attend the college, and watching that happen has meant a great deal to her. "Seeing how it has grown and seeing many of my students graduate from Crafton really makes me proud," she said. "I am so proud that this area has a college as fantastic as Crafton Hills College."

For students who are considering a career in education or student services, Blomquist's advice is direct: "Dream big and don't give up. You might find a different path to where you are headed, but you can't reach your ultimate destination without taking that first step."

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

CHC ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR, 2026

Do you know a fellow Crafton Hills College alum doing amazing things in their career or community? Or maybe that person is you! The Crafton Hills College Foundation is now accepting nominations for the 2026 Outstanding Alumni of the Year award.

Each year, the Foundation honors a former student who reflects the positive impact of the Crafton experience through professional achievement, leadership, and service to others. Alumni may self-nominate or be nominated by someone else.

To be eligible, nominees must have attended Crafton Hills College and successfully completed at least 3 credit units, demonstrated exceptional growth and achievement in their field, and made a meaningful impact through leadership or volunteerism in their community.

The selected honoree will be recognized at the Foundation's Annual Gala, Dinner, and Auction on Thursday, October 1. Help us celebrate the incredible accomplishments of our alumni community by submitting a nomination. Nominations due by Sunday, August 23.



Stephen Prutsman,
2025 CHC Outstanding Alumnus of the Year

[Nominate a CHC Alum today!](#)

To be eligible, nominees must meet the following criteria:

1. Must have attended Crafton Hills College and successfully completed at least 3 units.
2. Must have demonstrated exceptional growth and achievement in their field.
3. Have made a meaningful impact through leadership or volunteerism in their community.

You're Invited!

CHC ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

BRIGHT NIGHTS, BRIGHTER FUTURES

10.01.26

SUPPORT AND RECONNECT WITH YOUR ALMA MATER

Calling all Crafton alumni – you're invited back to campus for an evening of celebration, connection, and giving back at our Annual Fundraising Gala on Thursday, October 1, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the beautiful campus quad.

This special evening brings together alumni, friends, community members, and supporters to celebrate the impact of Crafton while helping support the college's students and programs. Your attendance directly helps provide opportunities that empower the next generation of Roadrunners.

Guests will enjoy a delicious dinner (included with admission), along with exciting live and silent auction items throughout the evening. Attire is casual (jeans are acceptable), but guests are encouraged to wear bright colors for the fiesta theme. Whether you're reconnecting with fellow alumni, supporting a meaningful cause, or simply enjoying a memorable night on campus quad, the gala promises something for everyone.

Individual tickets are \$100, and sponsorship opportunities are available for those looking to make an even greater impact.

Know a business that may want to support Crafton? We would love to connect with them! Businesses can participate through

sponsorships or by donating items for the live and silent auctions.

We hope you'll join us in making a difference for Crafton students while celebrating the spirit of our alumni community. Have questions? Contact Carrie Audet in the Foundation Office at 909-389-3245 or caudet@craftonhills.edu or visit the event page at www.craftonhills.edu/gala.

Ryker the Roadrunner with a few of the guests at last year's baseball themed gala



CRAFTON PROFESSOR INSPIRES STUDENTS TO TRUST THEIR OWN VOICES



RAPID-FIRE QUESTIONS WITH RYAN BARTLETT

**COFFEE OR TEA?
DIET DR. PEPPER**

**WHAT'S ALWAYS PLAYING IN
YOUR CAR?
DIET DR. PEPPER**

**WHAT SHOW ARE YOU WATCHING RIGHT NOW?
THE DAILY SHOW**

**A BOOK THAT CHANGED THE WAY YOU THINK?
THE MASTER AND MARGARITA
BY MIKHAIL BULGAKOV**

Ryan Bartlett never planned on becoming anything other than a teacher.

In many ways, you could argue the path was always there. Teaching ran through his family. His maternal grandmother was a teacher. Both of his parents were teachers. His grandmother was even his second-grade teacher in Rialto, where Bartlett remembers her reading to the class in a way that kept students “on the edge of their seats.”

“I don’t know, I think my grandmother is probably my life hero,” Bartlett said. “She took a genuine interest in every student.”

Her teaching ideology has stayed with him. She took it upon herself to make each student feel seen, especially the ones other people were quick to misunderstand or dismiss.

“She took an individual interest in every one of their learning

journeys and found something unique and special in all of them,” Bartlett said. “I think I internalized that.”

Today, after more than two decades of teaching, Bartlett brings that same approach to his own students at Crafton Hills College, where he has taught full-time since 2006 and part-time before that. As an English professor, he teaches writing, literature-based film studies, and courses that challenge students to think more deeply about themselves, their communities, and the world around them.

Crafton’s close community has kept Bartlett happy to return year after year.

Bartlett’s best friend, Jonathan Anderson, is also an English professor, and their offices are right next to each other. The two have known each other for almost 30 years, since they attended college together.

Bartlett’s students know him as someone who cares deeply not only about what happens in the classroom but also about what students carry with them when they leave it. He wants them to become stronger writers, but writing, to him, is never just about grammar or structure.

“I think they come into my class thinking that writing is about grammar and syntax,” Bartlett said. “When writing is about ideas. It’s about your individual, special, specific brand of ideas that are only yours.”

Speaking from his own experience, Bartlett said he grew up with ADHD and other challenges that made school difficult at times. As a child in the 1980s and early 1990s, he remembers often being in trouble without fully understanding why.

“I went through school with a lot of shame,” Bartlett said. “I felt intense shame and had a lack of self-worth.”

Having experienced this himself, Bartlett sees students differently today, especially those who may have been told, directly or indirectly, that they do not belong in academic spaces.

“I want students to feel supported,” Bartlett said. “I want them to know that they don’t have to navigate through everything alone.”

“I tell them every semester, I learn as much from you as you learn from me,” Bartlett said. “You are my teachers as well.”

His film course, The Film Experience, gives students another way to practice his approach. The class looks at film through a literary lens, with students studying theme, style, craft, character, and meaning.

Across all of his classes, Bartlett wants students to leave as thinkers and seekers of knowledge. He wants them to develop

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT - cont.

critical thinking skills that help them navigate a world that is “weird and confusing and constantly shifting and changing.” More than anything, he wants them to know they matter.

“Their voice, their story, the way they see the world may be exactly what sparks a meaningful and beautiful paradigm shift within their community and the world at large,” Bartlett said.

“I think my job more than anything is to get them to think outside of their own experiences, but also draw from their own experiences,” Bartlett said. “You’re doing both of those things simultaneously.”

Bartlett maintains that empathy is critical to his work not only as a teacher, but also as an individual.

“We are in an age right now where empathy is not valued,” Bartlett said. “I want to bring back empathy.”

This is part of the reason why Bartlett enjoys working at Crafton, as much as he does. He has the opportunity to see his students evolve on a personal level.

“People sometimes underestimate how transformative community colleges can be,” Bartlett said. “They’re places of discovery and deep learning, not only about different academic subjects, but also about oneself.”

When asked what advice he would give to alumni who are thinking about returning to school or starting something new, Bartlett said success does not have to follow one path. Instead, he encouraged them to stay open to new opportunities.

“Be true to yourself and pursue the things that genuinely bring you fulfillment,” Bartlett said. “Success looks different on everybody. It’s important to define success on your own terms.”

And while growth matters, he said, so does learning to appreciate where you are.

“Try not to spend all your energy focusing only on the next step or destination,” Bartlett said.

“There’s a lot of value in learning to appreciate where you are right now.”

After more than two decades in the classroom, Bartlett is happy to say that teaching is more than just a profession, but a way of life.

“This isn’t just a job for me,” Bartlett said. “This is a lifestyle.”

A LASTING LEGACY: 26 SEATS *Available*



The opportunity to sponsor a seat in Crafton Hills College’s new Finkelstein Performing Arts Center is coming to a close, with only 26 seats remaining.

This special campaign give supporters the chance to make a lasting impact on Crafton’s performing arts students, while becoming a permanent part of the college’s newest landmark. Each sponsored seat includes a personalized donor plate embossed with the donor’s name – or a name of their choosing – creating a meaningful legacy for years to come.

Funds raised through the effort will directly support the future of Crafton’s performing arts departments and student success. This endowment will enhance experiences for theatre, dance and music programs, impacting students for years to come. Crafton’s studding new 24,000 square-foot performing arts center, which officially opened on September 19, 2025, now serves as home to music, theater and dance performances.

Thousands of student will walk through Crafton’s doors in the years ahead. By sponsoring a seat, donors have the opportunity to support their education al journey while leaving a visible and lasting mark in a space where creativity and learning come to life.

Seats are still available for all levels (\$50, \$750, and \$1,000), and monthly payments can be made for up to 2 years. Don’t wait – only 26 seats remain!

For more information, contact the foundation at 909 - 389 - 3245 or visit: www.craftonhills.edu/seat

Alumni Campaign

ROADRUNNER ROLL CALL RECONNECTS HUNDREDS OF ALUMNI



Throughout the month of April, Crafton Hills College launched its first Alumni Outreach Campaign, a fun and collaborative effort designed to reconnect with former students and strengthen relationships with our growing alumni community. From April 1-30, five teams participated in a friendly competition to help locate alumni, update contact information, and gather stories about the lasting impact of Crafton.

The results exceeded expectations. Through outreach efforts, 377 alumni were reconnected – including 218 who updated their information and 159 alumni who were “found” and added to the Alumni Network. These reconnections help us better understand who our alumni are, where they are now, and the role Crafton continues to play in their journeys.

Teams used an impressive variety of outreach methods to reconnect with Roadrunners. Alumni were contacted through social media, email, workplace connections, and community organization affiliations. Team members attended local events and weren't shy about asking, “Are you a Crafton alum?” Creative outreach efforts even included placing an ad in the newspaper and setting up a table in front of a local Stater Bros., proving that reconnecting with alumni takes both persistence and community spirit.

Congratulations go to Team 3, this year's Alumni Outreach Campaign champions! Led by team captain David Avila, the winning team included Judy Cannon, Amy Minjares, Jenny Cunvong, Ivan Pena, and Giselle Cruz, whose outreach efforts helped make the campaign such a success.

One of the most exciting discoveries was the breadth of alumni represented. Nearly half of those reconnected attended Crafton in 2010 or more recently, while 13% graduated between 1970–1980, highlighting the deep and lasting connection generations of students have to the college.

As alumni shared updates and reflections, common themes emerged. Many described Crafton as a launching pad to a four-year institution or a direct pathway into meaningful careers. Alumni also fondly reflected on the people and places that shaped their experiences. Some of the most frequently remembered faculty and staff included Judy Cannon, Jim Holbrook, Amanda Ward, Jimmy Urbanovich, Steve Hellerman, Sam Truong, Dr. Brink, and Ericka Paddock, whose impact clearly left a lasting impression on students.

Another theme echoed throughout alumni responses was appreciation for Crafton's beautiful campus, with many recalling the setting as an important and memorable part of their college experience.

While the campaign has concluded, the work of reconnecting with alumni continues. Lessons learned from this outreach effort will help shape a future alumni campaign. In the meantime, Crafton is always collecting alumni contact information, updates, and stories through the Alumni page. Every story shared helps strengthen the Roadrunner community and celebrate the many paths that begin at Crafton. Please help us to stay connected by sharing your story or encouraging others to sign up for the FREE Alumni Network and stay connected at www.craftonhills.edu/alumni.

CRAFTON HILLS COLLEGE CELEBRATES RECORD CLASS AT 2026 COMMENCEMENT



Crafton Hills College held its 2026 Commencement Ceremony on Friday evening, May 15, celebrating the largest graduating class in the college's history. A total of 1,252 graduates earned 994 degrees and 1,163 certificates, both record highs, with 393 students walking across the stage in the outdoor quad ceremony that began at 5 p.m.

Crafton Hills College President Dr. Kevin Horan opened the ceremony by celebrating the college's transfer success, noting that for three of the last four years, Crafton Hills has had the highest acceptance rate to the University of California in the Inland Empire, and for two consecutive years has ranked second for acceptance to the CSU system.

Among the highlights of this year's class was a tradition Crafton has come to know well: families graduating together. The class of 2026 included two sets of cousins, four sets of siblings, and mothers crossing the stage alongside their children. An engaged couple and two married couples also celebrated the milestone together.

"THE FAMILY THAT STUDIES TOGETHER, GRADUATES TOGETHER."

The ceremony also celebrated graduates with ties to the Crafton community itself, as faculty and staff members saw their own family members cross the stage alongside the class of 2026.

San Bernardino Community College District Chancellor Dr. Diana Rodriguez addressed graduates with a message of encouragement and belonging. "This place is yours. You belong here. You earned your seat here," Rodriguez said. "And wherever you go next, Crafton Hills College goes with you." Rodriguez also called on graduates to pay their experience forward. "When the time is right, bring one more person with you. A younger sibling, a cousin, a friend, or a coworker

who keeps saying, 'I should go back to college someday.' Tell them: someday can start here."

Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Nathan Gonzales recognized the graduates as part of a larger legacy and challenged them to use their success in the service of others. "When inquisitive minds in the future look back at you, they will see graduates who became nurses, firefighters, paramedics, public safety professionals, teachers, business owners, skilled workers and leaders," Gonzales said. "They will see people who helped in emergencies. People who cared for families. People who built stronger workplaces. People who made their neighborhoods better, their communities better, and the Inland Empire better." Gonzales closed with a charge to the class: "As you leave here, ask yourself one question: How will I use what I learned to help someone else?"

Academic Senate President Natalie Lopez spoke to the faculty's commitment to student success. "Everything we do is grounded in a belief in your potential. You are the reason we serve and the reason we lead," Lopez said. "Step by step, assignment by assignment, semester by semester, you found your direction."

Student speaker Sierra Mason, a communications, political science, and anthropology major who served as vice president of the Student Senate, drew on the roadrunner as a symbol of the class's perseverance. "Everyone here has their own story of resilience, and everyone here has put an incredible amount of work into making it to this stage," Mason said. She closed by encouraging her classmates to carry those lessons forward. "May you carry the lessons of the roadrunner with you wherever you end up next."

Among this year's graduates, 490 finished with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, and 118 achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA. Nine students earned Bachelor of Science degrees in Respiratory Care, the college's only baccalaureate program, and were recognized with green caps and gowns. 35 of graduates who served in the United States military were honored with red, white, and blue cords. Additionally, 175 of the graduates earned college credit at Crafton while still in high school through the college's dual enrollment program, free of charge.

HOW TO GIVE

For over 50 years, the Crafton Hills College Foundation has supported CHC in advancing the educational, career, and personal success of our diverse campus community through engagement and learning. The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization; therefore, contributions to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

Your investment will make a significant difference in the life of a student.



PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

This elite group of donors make a \$1,000 annual commitment to support the mission of the CHC Foundation with a President's Circle Membership. This dynamic group of alumni, parents, faculty, and friends play a vital role in supporting the College, giving the President the flexibility to embrace new ideas and emerging opportunities while meeting the evolving needs of Crafton Hills College.



ANNUAL GIVING FUND

Contributions to the Annual Fund proved the precious gift of opportunity to thousands of deserving students by supporting scholarships and promoting excellence at the College. These unrestricted gifts give the Foundation the flexibility to respond to our student's greatest needs.



SCHOLARSHIPS

An Endowed Scholarship Fund is established through a minimum gift of cash or stock totaling \$12,500, which can be made over a period of five years. Endowment funds are invested prudently to establish a permanent fund in which the principal is held in perpetuity and only the investment income is expended annually (payout). These funds will support a scholarship forever.



PLANNED GIVING

The Foundation for CHC offers a variety of Planned Giving options. Whether your estate is simple or complex, there is a tax-advantaged gift planning vehicle that is just right for you. Your support will help CHC students succeed and will provide a lasting legacy for future generations.



STUDENT AND PROGRAM SUPPORT

Crafton Hills College provides quality instruction and support services that allow our students, many of whom face serious obstacles to completion, to pursue and achieve their educational goals. We are extremely proud to be the pathway to social and economic advancement for many who would otherwise not have the opportunity to pursue a college education. The college's low cost for an excellent education allows the impact of your investment to reach more students. Your gift to support CHC Students and Programs goes further at Crafton Hills College.



NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways you can make a lasting impact at Crafton Hills College and at the same time pay tribute to a notable and influential person or organization. The CHC Foundation is striving to secure permanent endowments to support the ever growing academic, programmatic, and student needs of the Crafton through Naming Opportunities.



STAY CONNECTED



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Crafton Hills College Foundation & Alumni