



LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

Newsletter January 2026

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season.

At the Foundation, we are very excited about not one, but two ribbon-cuttings scheduled at the end of the month for the [Valley Academic and Cultural Center](#) (VACC) and [Valley Academic Hall](#) (VAH)!

The opening of the VACC signals a bold new vision for the arts at LAVC. The facility will support a more collaborative learning environment by bringing the Media Arts and Theatre Arts Departments into a single complex, benefiting LAVC students studying arts, media and journalism.

The building features classrooms, rehearsal spaces, a newsroom, radio station, digital production studio, and features four separate theaters including a 450-seat Mainstage Theater, a 225-seat Screen Theater, a 150-seat Horseshoe Theater, and an 80-seat Lab Theater. In addition, there is also an exterior amphitheater for outdoor performances.

Valley Academic Hall, which is located on the south side of campus, will house many of LAVC's STEM-related departments including Business, Computer Science, Math, Psychology and Emergency Services.

We are tremendously excited about this new chapter for LAVC, and we look forward to the positive impact these facilities will have on our students.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schmitt
Executive Director

Featured Faculty:
Anthropology Chair Rebecca
Stein



Rebecca Stein, Chair of LAVC Anthropology Department

Rebecca Stein has taught at LAVC for nearly 25 years. Raised in Southern California, her early exposure to anthropology came through her father, who taught the subject at Pierce College and took her on field trips that revealed how people live, think, and connect. Though she once considered medical school, Stein realized her passion was understanding people and culture. When she first visited Valley College in 2000 for a job interview, she was struck by the campus's warmth and sense of community, qualities that continue to define her experience today as Chair of the Anthropology Department.

Professor Stein's classes invite students to explore human behavior across cultures while reflecting on their own beliefs and experiences. Whether discussing shamanism through pop culture or examining cultural traditions, she helps students connect theory to real life. In courses such as Anthropology of Religion and Medical Anthropology, student lived experiences enrich classroom discussions.

Beyond the classroom, Stein's work extends through Valley's mobile anthropology labs and campus partnerships that bring anthropology's human perspective to diverse fields such as Respiratory Therapy. Asked what she hopes her students remember most, her answer is simple: "Every human being deserves empathy, even when we disagree." For Stein, anthropology's greatest gift is curiosity by helping people understand one another and build stronger communities.

Respiratory Therapy Convocation



Graduating students, faculty and staff join LAVC President Dr. Barry Gribbons in celebrating the first Convocation for LAVC's Bachelors in Respiratory Therapy.

On December 16th, Los Angeles Valley College honored its very first cohort of students earning a Bachelor's in Respiratory Therapy. Fully accredited in 2024, the LAVC [Bachelor's of Science in Respiratory Care](#) offers current students and recent graduates a pathway to a four-year degree without having to transfer providing a way for licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP) to return for degree completion. Twenty-seven students matriculated in the program, many on hand to receive their ceremonial pins in an emotional ceremony. Congratulations to the class of 2025, the first Bachelor's of Science graduates in LAVC history!

LAVC Theatre Field Trip



Los Angeles Valley College Theatre and Dance students recently had the opportunity to attend the opening night of [SUFFS](#) at the historic Hollywood Pantages stage. For many students, this field trip marked their first time experiencing a professional theatrical performance. This opportunity was provided via the Foundation's Microgrant Program, where college departments apply for funding to support extra-curricular activities for students that are beyond the scope of their budgets.

Stephanie Dunn, a sophomore majoring in Film, Television and Media, told the Foundation: "I'm so grateful I had the opportunity to attend experiences like this that genuinely enrich my education, and I wouldn't have been able to go without the foundation's support. Thank you so much for making this possible!"

If you would like to support the Microgrant Program, [please click here](#).

LAVC Speech and Debate Team compete at PSCFA Fall Event



Amna Shah, Ani Latoyan, Arpi Danielyan, Anzhela Gabrielyan, Cristophen Bell-Hodge, Dianna Perez, Elliot Adlof, Gabriel Moncada, Gigi Travieso, Jessica Soderquist, Palente Henry Jr., and Nataliia Montealegre, under the guidance of coaches Duane Smith, Yancy Duncan, and Antonio Moorehead.

In December, the [Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association](#) (PSCFA) Fall Championships brought together dozens of colleges from across Southern California and beyond for a weekend of spirited speech and debate at Mt. San Antonio College. Two students, Elliot Adlof and Ani Latoyan, advanced to the final rounds. Elliot competed in the Novice Dramatic Interpretation category, while Ani reached the finals in Novice Persuasive about "Functional illiteracy in the USA", marking a proud achievement for the team.

Upcoming Events

Estate Planning Seminar



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ESTATE PLANNING, TRUST & PROBATE

Back by popular demand! Our second annual Estate Planning Seminar will be held on **Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 12:30 pm** at Los Angeles Valley College. Join us for this complimentary

seminar and learn how to create a personal plan that will protect your family's future. The event will include lunch. Special bonus opportunities: Learn how Life Insurance can help your financial planning needs and protect your family with a special post-lunch session with New York Life.

[To Register for the seminar and a planning session, please go here.](#)



Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) is a two-year community college in Valley Glen, CA and part of the nine-college Los Angeles Community College District. It serves a student body of over 18,000 students each year from some of the most disenfranchised communities in the San Fernando Valley. **The Los Angeles Valley College Foundation's** mission is to enhance the education of its students through community involvement and to provide additional financial resources to Los Angeles Valley College.

Donate to the LAVC Foundation

It's now easier than ever to support the Foundation with a gift of stock or via a Donor Advised Fund!
[For more information, please click here.](#)

Thank you to our President's Circle Member:

Former LAVC President Dr. Tyree Wieder

www.lavcfoundation.org | (818) 947-2619

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