



LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

Newsletter March 2026

Dear Friends,

There are many events on our March calendar highlighting students who are studying science, technology, engineering, and math fields. From the college's Pi Day celebration on March 10th, to the AI Cybersecurity Conference on March 12-13th, it's a busy month for STEM activities at LAVC.

Last week, [Los Angeles Community College District Chancellor Dr. Alberto Roman](#) launched LACCD's districtwide initiative: *LACCD. One District. One Vision. Student Success* with his first of nine town halls at LAVC. During the event, Dr. Roman outlined the district's vision and key priorities for the coming year: Increasing transfers, expanding completions, strengthening persistence and retention, and closing equity gaps. Dr. Roman fielded questions from administrators, faculty and staff as he hopes to synthesize input and participation from across all nine LACCD campuses in this effort.



Los Angeles Community College Chancellor Dr. Alberto Roman speaks to faculty, students and staff at LAVC.

The new Valley Academic Hall is officially open, and classrooms are full! If you have not had a chance to see the building, stop by the Farmer's Market on Sundays and walk over!

I'd like to close out this month's letter by thanking the elected officials who continue to support LAVC including [Congresswoman Luz Rivas](#), [Los Angeles County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath](#), [California Assemblymember Celeste Rodriguez](#), and [Los Angeles City Councilmember Adrin Nazarian](#). Your continued support of the college and its efforts is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schmitt
Executive Director

Featured Faculty: CSIS Professor Mario Perez



Mario Perez, CSIS Professor/Network Engineer

Professor Mario Perez is a faculty member in LAVC's Computer Science Information Systems program (CSIS) and a nationally recognized leader in cybersecurity workforce development. Among his many duties, Mario also serves as a Principal Investigator for the [National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological](#)

[Education](#). His work focuses on building industry-aligned curriculum, strengthening partnerships, and preparing students for high-demand technology careers. He is a member of [the ATARC Cybersecurity Education and Workforce Development Working Group](#) and the [NICE Community Coordinating Council](#), as well as the [California Cybersecurity Task Force](#), serving on both the Cyber Risk Management and Workforce Development subcommittees.

Mario's journey into information technology began in 1996, when he was taking his first computer class. One of his professors was also the manager of the district office data center, and he offered Mario a student worker position. That opportunity opened the door to a lifelong career in technology. From there, Mario moved through multiple technical roles in LACCD, working as a computer operator, computer operator supervisor, and data communications specialist. Today, he continues as a network engineer of the OIT Department supporting several colleges including Valley College, Pierce College, Mission College and LA Trade-Tech.

After launching Mission College's cybersecurity program, Mario collaborated with LAVC's Dean of Career and Technical Education to develop LAVC's program with the goal of making it a cybersecurity hub for the region. LAVC has since launched a noncredit cybersecurity program, is finalizing its credit program, and is preparing to open a dedicated cybersecurity and AI security center on campus.

Mario encourages individuals who are curious about cybersecurity to start with LAVC's [noncredit certificate programs](#), which allow students to explore the field at no cost.

Upcoming Events

Pi/STEM/MEC Day



PI/STEM/MEC DAY!



March 10, 2026

11 AM - 2 PM

LAVC MONARCH HALL



[Pi / STEM / MEC Day](#) is a high-energy celebration of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) and MEC (Manufacturing, Electronics and Construction) Career & Academic Pathways, held in honor of Pi Day. LAVC students will explore interactive demos, hands-on activities, and real-world applications that connect science and technology to college majors and careers. Speakers include Andrew Baczewski, Computing Quantum Physicist from [Sandia National Laboratories](#), and Sandra Grigoletti, U.S. Sales Director from [CSC Robotics](#). Come explore, experiment, and see what's possible! This event is open to all on **Tuesday, March 10th at 11 a.m.**

2026 Cybersecurity Conference



LAVC will host a two-day AI Cybersecurity summit on **March 12-13, 2026** exploring innovative solutions addressing California's AI-

Cybersecurity skills gap. The first day is student-focused on exploring education and career pathways in cybersecurity. The second day is industry-focused addressing workforce needs and innovation in the sector.

This event is co-sponsored by the [Los Angeles Regional Consortium \(LARC\)](#), LAVC Career Technical Education (CTE), and the LAVC Computer Science Information Systems (CSIS) Department.

To register to attend, please click [HERE](#) or [email](#) Mario Perez.

Artist Reception



The LAVC Art Gallery invites you to an opening reception for its latest exhibition, [What Remains: Memory, Rirtual, Trace](#).

Throughout human history, the experience of loss—whether through physical absence, cultural erasure, or profound transformation—has shaped how we understand ourselves and our connections to others. What Remains: Memory, Ritual, Trace explores these many forms of “a kind of death” and the fragile, yet powerful, processes of mourning and healing that follow. Artists will be in attendance. The event will be on **Tuesday, March 10 from 12-2 p.m. in the Art Gallery.**

Previous Events

Valley Academic Hall Ribbon Cutting



Pictured Left to Right: LAVC Dean Brandon Hildreth, LAVC Dean Michelle Fowles, Pamela Villasenor *Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians*, Executive Director, Pukú Cultural Community Services, LACCD Vice Chancellor Dr. Leigh Sata, LAVC President Dr. Barry Gribbons, LACCD Chancellor Dr. Alberto Roman, Congresswoman Luz Rivas, LACCD Trustee Steven Veres, LAVC ASU President Melvin Martinez, and LACCD Student Trustee Jasmin Frances.

On February 6th, CA-29 [Congresswoman Luz Rivas](#) cut the ribbon officially opening Valley Academic Hall, which will be the new location for LAVC's Business, CIS, Emergency Services, Mathematics and Psychology instruction. Congresswoman Rivas was instrumental in ensuring LAVC was awarded [one million dollars in federal funding to establish its Cybersecurity Center](#) as part of its CIS program. The center will support California's statewide initiative to train 50,000 entry-level cybersecurity professionals by 2030.

Valley Black Scholars Day



In honor of Black History Month, LAVC held its fourth annual Valley Young Black Scholars Day where students traveled to campus to learn about LAVC's [Umoja Program](#) and the college's academic opportunities. Middle and High School students from LAUSD's Region North attended.

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:

The Sheila, Dave, and Sherry Gold Foundation

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