



# G R O S S M O N T C O L L E G E

## *President's Report to the Governing Board October 12, 2021*

*The Grossmont College Strategic Plan, which evolved from Grossmont College's Achieving the Dream goals, is focused on outreach, engagement, retention, and institutional capacity.*

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### OUTREACH

Grossmont College on October 15 concludes an engaging menu of diverse Latinx Heritage Month events that incorporated both live and virtual programming open to Grossmont College students, faculty, classified professionals, and the local community.



Latinx Heritage Month at Grossmont College began September 14 with “A Latinx Experience: Overcoming Barriers & Achieving Success,” an online presentation led by Dr. Juan Carlos Reyna and Gabriela Soto. Among the live events were a Mariachi performance and presentation on September 16 and a Ballet Folklorico history and performance on October 8. Both were held at Griffin Gate. Other highlights included An Evening with Paul Espinoza, a Salsa Concert with Manny Cepeda, a Mujeres in STEM Panel, and a Latinx Entrepreneurs Panel.

Often referred to as Hispanic Heritage Month, Latinx Heritage Month officially begins on the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua – all of which declared national sovereignty in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile, and Belize celebrate their independence on September 16, 18, and 21 respectively.

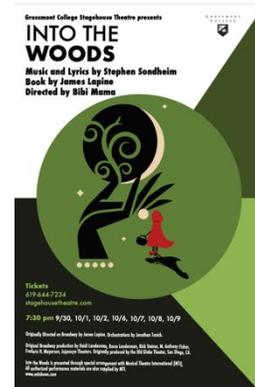
Grossmont College, a proud Hispanic Serving Institution, also will be participating with community colleges throughout California in Undocumented Student Action Week beginning October 18.

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### ENGAGEMENT

Grossmont College's Stagehouse Theatre, which has not permitted in-person performances for more than 18 months because of the COVID-19 pandemic, reopened to live audiences when it launched its 2021-22 season September 30 with a staging of Into the Woods.

“The faculty and staff of the Grossmont College Theatre Arts Department are excited to welcome back students and members of the community as we engage in our first production at the Stagehouse Theatre since March of 2020,” said Theatre Arts Department co-chair Katie Banville. “The safety of our students, faculty, classified professionals, and the public is paramount, and we have instituted a number of COVID-19 protocols to help ensure everyone’s safety. Most of all, we are thrilled to give our students and patrons the opportunity to reconnect in a shared space as we return to the magical experience that is live, in-person performance.”



All guests must show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or a negative PCR test within 72 hours of the performance to enter the theatre. Masks are required. Because social distancing will be in effect, tickets will be limited. Future performances include Sugar & Seeds (October 16); By the Way, Meet Vera Stark (December 2 – 11); Pride & Prejudice (March 17 – 26); and The Wedding Band (May 12 – 21).

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## INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

More than 100 faculty and classified staff joined President Denise Whisenhunt and the President’s Cabinet for a virtual [Collegewide Forum](#) on September 21 for updates on accreditation, enrollment, facilities and maintenance operations, the Safe Return to Campus, marketing and communications, and more. Among the highlights, President Whisenhunt detailed how maintaining a proper balance in our lives is a core value at Grossmont College and detailed weekly mental health meditation.

Student Services Vice President Marsha Gable thanked everyone for their contributions in keeping Grossmont College safe during the pandemic and in responding to positive COVID-19 cases, and she held out special praise to Faridullah Mokhli, a CalWORKS student and cultural ambassador who has been helping other Afghan students be successful during a trying time in their life. Academic Affairs Vice President Dr. Marshall Fulbright discussed ongoing collaborations among different departments, re-engagement outside of the classroom,

### VP Academic Affairs

- ▶ Collaborations
  - (Expanded) Academic Affairs Council
- ▶ Re-Engagement
  - Think about how you/we can reengage students OUTSIDE of the classroom
- ▶ Student-Centered Scheduling & Guided Pathways



and student-centered scheduling and Guided Pathways. Administrative Services Vice President Bill McGreevy discussed the recently adopted Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District budget and its impacts on Grossmont College, where salary and benefits comprise 88.7% of the college’s unrestricted general fund budget. Dr. Joan Ahrens, Interim Senior Dean of College Planning & Institutional Effectiveness discussed Grossmont College’s accreditation benchmarks and a follow-up accreditation report, updating the college’s Strategic Plan, upcoming college forums, and more. And Interim Director of College and Community Relations David Ogul detailed current marketing efforts, such as a just-concluded strategic digital marketing plan promoting career education, a campaign during which ads touting training for resilient jobs had more than 664,000 impressions on Facebook and

Instagram, more than 50,000 impressions via Google ads, and reached more than 260,000 viewers on streaming services such as Apple TV and Hulu.

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## RETENTION

Nedra Brown is transforming lives through athletics. And for good reason.

“Athletics saved my life,” said Brown, who immersed herself in sports after trying out for the girls’ basketball team at her middle school in Memphis, Tennessee. “I wasn’t any good, but the coach would not cut anybody. If you didn’t quit, you were on the team. I was hooked from then on and I’ve been involved in athletics since. If not for the fact that she gave me an opportunity, that she stuck with me, that she did not cut me, I would not be sitting here talking to you today. Athletics kept me out of trouble and provided me an avenue to go to college.”

Brown, the Grossmont College athletic director and associate dean of athletics since July 2019, went on to earn a scholarship in basketball and volleyball to LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis, from where she earned a bachelor’s degree in biology. She later earned a master’s degree in education from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee.



Her first job out of college was as a teacher and middle school track coach and there was no turning back. Brown’s resume includes serving as the head women’s volleyball coach and assistant women’s basketball coach at LeMoyne-Owen College; the head women’s volleyball coach at Kentucky State University; the head women’s volleyball and softball coach at Alabama A&M University; associate athletic director in charge of internal operations at Jackson State University; associate athletic director in charge of compliance and academics at Saginaw Valley State University; and assistant athletics director at Santa Monica College. Brown’s volleyball teams at Alabama A&M won four Southwestern Athletic Conference titles, and went on to play against the likes of UCLA, Tennessee, and Florida State in the NCAA Division I tournament.

“I don’t take my responsibilities here lightly,” Brown said. “This is my purpose; this is my mission. This is who I am, this is what I am, this is not just something that I do.”

The daughter of a single mom who struggled to make ends meet, Brown is dedicated to her students and a determined role model. “I understand what they’re going through. I get it. I’ve been there. I’ve experienced the deficiencies and barriers that come with attending schools that are underfunded. I, myself, was homeless as a college student-athlete, and once again, my coaches helped save my life.

Her mission at Grossmont includes creating an Athletics Department where students can find any resource to help them be successful, including additional advisors, a computer lab, food pantry, and student success center – all housed in the Athletics Department.

“My students,” Brown said, “are my priority.”