



SAN JOSÉ · EVERGREEN  
Community College District

# THE FIRST 100 DAYS & BEYOND

Chancellor's  
Listening Tour Report

FALL 2024



## DEAR SJECED COMMUNITY,

In spring 2024, I was honored to be selected by the San José – Evergreen Community College District (SJECED) Board of Trustees as the permanent Chancellor after serving as Interim Chancellor for approximately nine months. Although I had been with the District for more than four years as Associate Vice Chancellor and then Vice Chancellor of Human Resources, I was still eager to meet with students, community partners, and—perhaps most importantly—you, the employees of our District.

I am excited to report that my time spent meeting with Evergreen Valley College, San José City College, and District Office stakeholders was extremely informative, very fruitful, and at times eye-opening. I was left inspired by your commitment to our students, our community, and your colleagues; encouraged by your willingness to engage in difficult conversations and share your invaluable perspectives and insights; and energized by the opportunities that lay before us, however daunting they may seem right now.

The listening tour helped me to better understand our District's strengths, as well as our challenges and ways we can work collaboratively to identify strategies and priorities for addressing them. Approximately 250 employees took the opportunity to participate and have their voice heard, across multiple listening sessions available both in-person on each of our campuses and the District Office as well as via Zoom and in a web survey that was sent out to all employees following the listening sessions.

From these 250 voices, four key themes emerged, which you will find outlined in this report. Not all feedback fits nicely into one of the major themes, and some could reasonably fit into multiple themes, but I have attempted to present this information in a format that is easy to read and digest.

While this initial listening tour is now complete, I remain committed to engaging with you openly and transparently and will continue to provide opportunities for all employees in our District to provide ongoing input and feedback.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with you all to explore ways we can better serve our community and our students and I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve you as Chancellor!

Sincerely,

*Beatriz S. Chaidez*  
Beatriz Chaidez  
SJECED Chancellor

# THEME 1 EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

## Summary of What I Heard:

### Remote Work and Work-Life Balance

There is a call for enhanced remote work options and flexibility. Employees appreciate the ability to work remotely and suggest making this a more permanent option.

### Accountability

There was an emphasis on holding employees at all levels of the organization accountable—particularly those not meeting expectations. When we are not held accountable to ourselves and each other, our students pay the price.

### Campus Climate and Employee Equity

There were calls for improving equity among employees, especially for part-time employees who report feeling underpaid and marginalized compared to their full-time peers. There's also a push for more viewpoint diversity and creating a welcoming campus environment for all. Concerns were also shared regarding the proportion of full-time faculty and improving the treatment of classified professionals. There's a desire for a fair and equitable workplace that values all employees.

### Employee Welfare and Support

Prioritizing employee welfare, including mental health support and work-life balance initiatives, is essential for maintaining a productive workforce.

### Professional Development and Training

There is a demand for more professional development opportunities, especially in areas like AI and leadership coaching. Investing in staff development is seen as vital for the institution's progress.



## Areas to Explore Moving Forward

How can we better understand both the benefits and challenges related to remote work?

What does accountability look like and how can we infuse it throughout all levels of our District?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure leadership is responsive to employee feedback and concerns?

What can we do to improve campus climate and overall support for all employees?

What opportunities exist to support our current talent that could enhance professional growth and/or advancement within our District?

Are there specific areas where more professional development is needed, particularly regarding technology and emerging fields like AI?

# THEME 2 STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## Summary of What I Heard:

### Student-Centered Approach

I received substantial feedback regarding re-focusing our efforts to prioritize student support and student success. There was a call for enhanced, wraparound student support services as well as reevaluating the course schedule and offering classes based on student need and student demand. There were also concerns regarding recent policy changes impacting student transfer practices.

### Student Success and Support

There was a call for enhanced programs and resources that directly support student achievement, retention, and completion, including: Expand tutoring and advising, increased scholarship opportunities, and improved financial aid awareness among our student bodies, particularly for students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups.

### Prioritize Mental Health Services

I heard that more emphasis should be placed on ensuring students have access to high-quality mental health services from our campuses.

### Waitlist Management

There was a desire among many respondents to reevaluate how we manage waitlists at both colleges in order to better serve students and ensure they have access to the courses needed for degree completion and transfer.



## Areas to Explore Moving Forward

How can we deepen our understanding of the student experience in order to enhance the student-centered approach?

How can we better understand the unique needs of our students and ensure we are developing programs and services to meet their needs?

What data do we currently have—and what data do we need—that will help us make informed decisions regarding current availability and accessibility of student support services, as well as identify gaps in services?

# THEME 3 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

## Summary of What I Heard:

### Leadership and Management

There were calls for more effective leadership and management, with concerns about absenteeism among management ranks. Employees seek stability and leadership that leads by example and fosters a supportive work culture.

### Budget Management

Information shared during the listening tours highlighted concerns regarding fiscal responsibility, transparency in budget allocation, and ensuring resources are fairly distributed across departments and campuses.

### Communication

I received feedback during the listening tours that illustrated a desire for enhanced two-way communications between the District Office, the colleges, and employees. There is a need for transparency and better collaboration in decision-making, particularly around major process changes.

### Technology Improvements

Listening tour input highlighted frustration among employees and students with technology, including limitations with current IT infrastructure and negative impacts on day-to-day operations and employee productivity.



## Areas to Explore Moving Forward

What opportunities currently exist for employees to interact and communicate directly with leadership?

How can we provide more opportunities to do so?

What leadership qualities and actions do employees value and expect from management?

How can we improve transparency in the budget process?

What communication strategies can be employed to ensure employees are informed about financial decisions and priorities?

How do our budget allocations align with the District's strategic priorities, mission, vision, and values?

How effective are current communication strategies and channels between the District Office and campuses?  
Between employees and leadership?

How effectively does leadership communicate the District's vision and strategic goals?

What specific issues and limitations are we facing due to current IT infrastructure and practices?

Are sufficient resources currently being allocated to IT?

How can we gather data to inform potential changes to our IT infrastructure and systems?

# THEME 4 UNITY AND COLLABORATION

## Summary of What I Heard:

### More Collaboration Between Colleges

Many employees expressed a desire for more opportunities for collaboration between colleges, including joint committees and working groups and more professional development that provides opportunities to work with colleagues across the District.

### Common Practices Throughout District

I heard about discrepancies that exist between the two colleges when it comes to various practices and how we serve students. Our colleges are unique and sometimes a one-size-fits-all approach does not work, but there was a call for evaluating practices throughout the District and determining when uniform procedures and practices will result in better service.

## Areas to Explore Moving Forward

How can we be intentional about creating more opportunities for collaboration?

How do we balance the need for professional development and collaboration with the need for time so employees can complete their work?

How can we identify areas where practices are not uniform throughout the District, and what metrics or data will we use to determine whether this is working for students or whether change is needed?



Please turn to the back page to learn about our **NEXT STEPS**

# NEXT STEPS

## Continue to Listen and Transparently Share Information

Throughout the 2024-2025 academic year, I will continue to host listening sessions and provide opportunities for everyone in our organization to share their thoughts, concerns, and possible solutions regarding the challenges facing our District.

## Form a Districtwide Task Force

This fall, I will form a Districtwide task force focused on reviewing and the findings of my listening sessions and developing recommendations and action steps for how we can collaboratively address the issues and concerns that have been raised.



Photo courtesy of San José Spotlight

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