

GLENDALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# ALUMNI NEWS

SPRING 2021

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## A LIFETIME OF GIVING

Foundation board member Angela Collins recognized along with the Mobile Food Pantry.

Stable. Charitable. Adaptable. Founded in 1983, Glendale College Foundation has a strong history of adapting to changes within the community and world with support of charitable community members and alumni.



**alumni**  
association

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## Dr. David Viar, Superintendent/President

A lifetime of giving, the theme of this edition of Alumni News, defines the essence of Glendale Community College. From its birth in 1928, GCC has been giving. Through its faculty, staff, and board, the college is committed to giving students a bridge to close the gap between their hopes and a reality of accomplishment.

GCC's tradition of giving has endured no matter the situation –the Great Depression, multiple wars, the Civil Rights Movement, the Major Recession, the COVID-19 pandemic and last summer's racial reckoning. With each new academic year and term, GCC faculty and staff rise to the occasion, making adjustments in teaching and service, addressing societal and economic needs through changes in the curriculum.

One year ago, our faculty and staff faced the daunting challenge of quickly transitioning to a remote learning environment while maintaining GCC's high standards of education. With safety our number one priority, we challenged ourselves to do more than just survive. We wanted our students to thrive –and they have. For example, our science instructors have created a vibrant and interactive curriculum. In our theater arts department, students are learning new ways to collaborate building mini studios in their homes and creating videos that are coalesced into thrilling productions.

These creative approaches to teaching remotely are not the exception, they have become the norm.

Remote learning also has created the opportunity to focus on several Measure GC funded construction projects. By the end of the summer, we expect to have completed our new Verdugo gym and have broken ground on a new five-story science building. We also are designing a stunning facility that will house visual and performing arts, dance, media arts and kinesiology classes, a recital hall and a much-needed conference center.

We know that the impact of the pandemic will eventually recede leading the state and county to relax their guidelines and allow our students to return to campus. We plan to be ready for that day and look forward to phasing in face to face learning opportunities. We will give everything we have to ensure we return successfully.

As you read this, I am sure you can think of a faculty or staff member who gave something special to you during your time at GCC, an example of hope in action. And I am certain that when you have an opportunity you will join with the Glendale College Foundation in giving. No matter the challenge, Glendale Community College has proven it is ready and able –an institutional lifetime of giving.



# A LIFETIME OF GIVING:

## Foundation board member Angela Collins recognized along with the Mobile Food Pantry.

"Generous" and "kind" are just some words Angela Collins' friends would use to describe her. Collins, a Glendale College Foundation (GCF) board member, recently participated in Glendale Community College's (GCC) Mobile Food Pantry, which provides free food and groceries to all who attend, not just GCC students.

At the specific event she attended, more than 50 volunteers came together to provide groceries to 1,311 families, totalling an estimated 4,800 individuals in the community.

"Volunteering alongside dozens of others who genuinely care about the people in their community and their well being was so incredibly rewarding," said Collins. "I think I was most inspired by the volunteers of all ages coming together to help others. The thank you's from the recipients were so heartfelt and grateful, it made me want to do it again -- I hope to volunteer again soon."

Collins attended GCC from 1983 to 1984 and played volleyball. She attributed her education and coaching at GCC as instrumental in her ability to go on to play at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), where she continued her successful volleyball career. It was at CSUN that she and her team captured a NCAA Division 2 Championship in 1987, the year she also earned a bachelors' degree in Kinesiology.

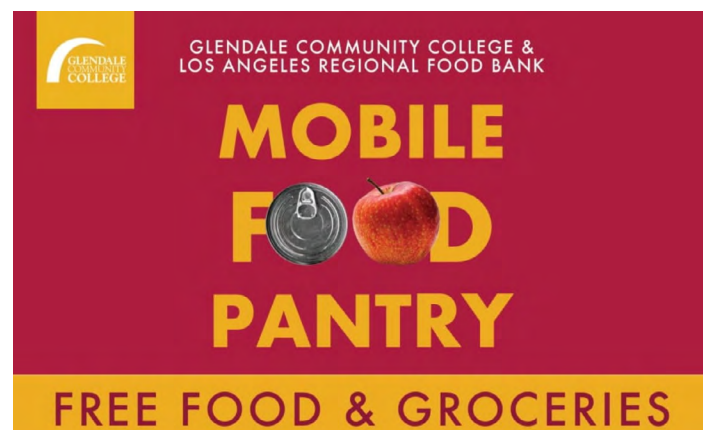
Collins taught elementary physical education and middle school science and math for seven years and was an assistant coach at CSUN for four years. Collins was inducted into the GCC Hall of Fame in 2011, and has been a Foundation board member for seven years.

She is proud of all that the board has accomplished, and cited the board's leadership as part of the reason for its efficacy.

"We are lucky to have fantastic leadership with (GCC Superintendent/President) Dr. David Viar and Lisa Brooks (Executive Director) with the Foundation," she said.

Since COVID-19, the food pantry now offers a drive-through operation in addition to safely operating a walk-up food pantry, and is held in the parking structure at GCC's Verdugo Campus. Volunteers are available to load boxes of food directly into trunks to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. The mobile food pantry held on March 3, 2021 was the largest to date; with over 100 volunteers, the pantry served over 1,900 families comprised of over 7,000 individuals. Since the start of the pandemic, the mobile food pantry has provided over 1,000,000 pounds of fresh and healthy food and groceries to the community. Collins said that the Mobile Food Pantry is made possible through the support of the The Glendale College Police Department, which assists with the safe and efficient operation of the drive through food pantry; the GCC Facilities Department, which helps coordinate the set up and take down; the hundreds of volunteers; the YMCA of the Foothills; and all of the donors including the Growing Hope Team, Keller Williams Realty, Glendale and the GCC Foundation.

For those who wish to volunteer or donate, visit [glendale.edu/students/student-services/student-basic-needs/food-support/food-pantry](http://glendale.edu/students/student-services/student-basic-needs/food-support/food-pantry).



# WHEN STUDENTS ARE IN NEED, GCC ANSWERS THE CALL

Many Glendale Community College (GCC) students, just like countless others in California and around the country, are struggling to get their basic needs met. Thousands of GCC students and their families saw their jobs disappear after the COVID-19 forced the world into isolation and the economy to shrink significantly. Suddenly, GCC students and their families worried about having food on their tables and a roof over their heads.

GCC has seen the increase in basic need assistance for its student population and has responded with increasing the access to emergency grants, the food pantry inventory and increased resources to incentivize keeping students in school.

This is not the first effort for GCC to respond to the needs of its community. In fact, it was the sudden and immediate demand GCC saw on its food pantry that gave a clue to Glendale College Foundation and the college that it needed to increase its response as the pandemic wore on.

GCC's food pantry saw an exponential increase of families in need of its services. Pre-pandemic, the average attendance at the Mobile Food Pantry was 250-300 students. Now, as a drive-through, the

Mobile Food Pantry has seen as many as 1,900 families, according to Andre Manukyan, GCC interim program manager for the Center for Assistance, Resources and Educational Success (CARES). He said many of the students who faced food insecurity also often faced housing insecurity, an inability to pay their utility bill or afford internet, and access to healthcare.

"So basic needs insecurities don't usually operate in a silo. When someone can't afford food, they can't usually afford other basic needs as well," Manukyan said. "So we as a college began to strategize about how to address these issues, given the limited resources that GCC has. How do we ensure that students do not leave college, especially now, because they're worried about not being able to feed or house themselves?"



FOUNDATION for CALIFORNIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGES



The answer? The Fresh Success grant, a part of the federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) or CalFresh in the Golden State, which helps to keep students in school during hard times by providing assistance with these basic needs, providing them with classes, case management, career workshops and financial literacy workshops that will increase their employability. Glendale College Foundation was able to secure the funding, and is also the group that disburses the funds to the college, which then administers the grant to students. GCC has helped by streamlining the grant process and successfully competing for a number of new grants. The program is also, in part, funded by the City of Glendale.

"The goal of the program is to increase the employability of community college students who receive CalFresh and while we do that, also be able to provide supportive services, including help with utilities, food, housing, hygiene products, and other

basic needs so students can remain at GCC and become more employable after GCC," he said.

Manukyan's office has identified low-income and eligible students and is reaching out to these individuals via their student emails. GCC is taking a phased approach with rolling out the grant, offering the ability to apply for the grant first to low-income full-time students in career and technical education courses or English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, then noncredit students at the Garfield campus, and then part-time students.

For more information about the Fresh Success grant and eligibility, email [Cares@glendale.edu](mailto:Cares@glendale.edu).

If you would like to donate to the Glendale College Foundation emergency fund, click here: <https://www.glendale.edu/about-gcc/foundation-community/emergency-fund>



## STUDENT FEATURES

### VANESSA ANGELES

#### Immigrating Home: GCC student finds new home and community in Glendale

There is nothing more important than family.

For Glendale Community College (GCC) student Vanessa Angeles, this belief is a fundamental part of her being. The former Associated Student Government of Glendale Community College (ASGCC) president and student trustee said she puts her family and her commitment to it at the heart of every decision she makes.

Angeles and her family have been living in the United States for the past four years, emigrating from the Philippines. Her mother, her then seven-year-old sister and Angeles moved to Glendale in search of a better life. After moving from house to house, including sometimes living out of a car, Glendale felt like a new kind of paradise of opportunity for her family, she said.

"There are so many good opportunities here that I could take advantage of," she said. "I'm really thankful that GCC chose me and I get to explore the options that it offered."

Angeles said she feels a great responsibility to her, particularly her younger sister, and actively tries to set a good example for her.

"Everything I do is dedicated to my family," she said. "Everything down to every decision I make, being a president or canceling a meeting. It's always for my family. Ever since we immigrated, it's just me, my mom and my sister and so whenever I do anything, I think about if I am still able to make time for them, especially my sister who is really in a formative age."

Andre Manukyan, GCC interim program manager for the Center for Assistance, Resources and Educational Success (CARES), said Angeles was a phenomenal

leader and stepped up to the challenge of leading students in a virtual environment.

"She was always a really excellent student at all the work she was doing. But (when she was elected president of ASGCC) she questioned 'can I really exercise leadership in a virtual environment?' he said. "And she and I talked, and I told her that this is exactly the type of environment that requires even more leadership to motivate, lead and engage students in a virtual environment. And she took on the responsibility."

He added that Angeles was unique as president and student trustee in that she focused on advocating for a more equitable, diverse and inclusive environment on the GCC campus and within student government, and helping students access resources to meet their basic needs.

"She always had that lens of 'how do I support students who tend to be traditionally marginalized' and who are disproportionately impacted, affecting their ability to be successful as students," Manukyan said.

When asked about her next move or her bigger dreams, Angeles is unsure of what it will look like. She is considering finding an internship locally at a law firm to see if she would like to pursue law. If it seems like a good fit, then she plans to apply elsewhere to finish her undergraduate degree and eventually law school. Although she is not sure about her trajectory, she knows one thing for sure. She will stay close to her mother and sister.



Vanessa Angeles

## ARNO ABRAHAMIAN

### Resilience in the age of COVID-19: Cultivating friendship and family in a virtual world

Glendale Community College (GCC), with its high academic standards and its convenient location, was an obvious choice for Arno Abrahamian. The 19-year-old Associated Students of Glendale Community College (ASGCC) vice president of relations oversees ASGCC's digital presence, including its website and social media platforms.

It is in these digital spaces that the architecture major, unexpectedly, feels at home. Like most college students his age, the COVID-19 pandemic was not something he saw coming. Being stuck inside with little access to others outside of his family was tough in the beginning. Like many college students, his mental health suffered overall.

Having a safe place when he can truly be his full, authentic self, was something Abrahamian imagined he would find in college. Drawing from his experience managing the digital channels for ASGCC, Abrahamian decided he wanted to connect with and help guide other students in his major. He formed the online architecture club, a group for others in his department to meet, talk about issues important to students in the program, and support one another through their classes and the pandemic.

"GCC, for me, became a home away from home. And then the pandemic hit, and at first, we all thought this was going to be just a week off and then we're going to come back to school," he said. "Then fall semester came around, I joined ASGCC because I wanted to join a collaborative environment and contribute some of my ideas. And I started the architecture club as well and I did it primarily because I wanted to have a community at home and share that with other students."

Tzoler Oukayan, Dean of Student Affairs at Glendale

Community College, said these virtual club spaces have seen an exponential increase in participation since the beginning of the pandemic, and that students are hungry for connection with their peers.

"I think what we found when we went to the virtual environment is students felt that they lacked community. You go into the classroom and all of the cameras are off. And the quintessential college experience is the friendships you make and the bonds you build with individuals and this pandemic completely changed that, with everything being virtual," she said. "The question becomes, for many, how do you get a sense of belonging on Zoom? It's near impossible, and so the student government and Arno in his role now, they're focused on trying multiple different strategies to recreate that experience for students."

Abrahamian said he cares deeply about his family and plans to attend a nearby university so that he can stay close to his family and finish his architecture degree.



Arno Abrahamian

# LEARNING MUSIC REMOTELY NO LONGER VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE

If COVID-19 has taught us anything about Glendale Community College, it is that its faculty, staff and students are creative, resourceful and resilient.

Dr. Peter Green, Chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Division at GCC, and the students in the department are the perfect example of that dedication and tenacity. How do you teach and learn about performing arts without a stage, without an audience, and isolated from others?

Undeterred, the students and faculty figured out how to practice their craft and perform, even in a virtual learning environment. In spite of the seemingly effortless and breathtaking performances posted on the GCC Music Department's YouTube channel, the road to delivering high-quality education for these students was far from easy.

Dr. Green said teaching choir from his home has been the greatest challenge thus far in the age of remote learning.

"We are all on Zoom, but because of Zoom's limitations we can't all sing at the same time, so everyone has to have their microphones muted," he said. "I don't actually hear my singers until they send in their videos for the final performance. Also, it takes so much energy to teach on Zoom – you don't get the same cues back from your students since it is just a computer screen, so it is hard to keep everyone engaged all the time."

Some programs, however, have adapted very well to remote learning. Dr. Green said many of the dance classes are doing well working together, although the dance performance class had to be canceled because there was no way to bring performers together safely. The dance instructors teach while the students watch, then students are often put into breakout groups so they can work on things together. Once the act is perfected, the students record their own videos and sub



Dr. Peter Green  
Visual and Performing Arts Division Chair

mit them to their instructors. For the more group-oriented assignments, the individual videos are stitched all together so all of the dancers are moving together on the computer screen.

Leave it to the creative faculty and students to figure

out innovative ways to keep practicing their art. GCC faculty and students have turned their homes into makeshift performance halls for virtual concerts. The GCC Theatre Department is planning a virtual show this spring, which will be recorded and stitched together in the editing room for a cohesive experience. The Media Arts students are able to access the equipment on campus from their homes so they have continued learning and working in a remote environment as well. GCC Dance Instructor Victor Robles and Dr. Green said they are currently coordinating an act together -- Green's choir singers, two members of the GCC orchestra will be creating the music and the dancers will be performing to it.

Dr. Green, who was nominated for a Grammy Award for an album he recorded in May 2008, offered advice to students and aspiring artists and performers.

**Dr. Green said teaching choir from his home has been the greatest challenge thus far in the age of remote learning.**

"It's more difficult to concentrate and practice now than ever, so keep working at it!" he said. "Take breaks if you are working at home so you don't get mentally fatigued."

To watch virtual performances from GCC's Music Department, visit its YouTube channel: [bit.ly/3k9iNaU](https://bit.ly/3k9iNaU).

# BIRTHDAY PERKS IF YOU ARE 70½

## TIP OF THE MONTH

If you do not need the money the government is requiring you to take through your IRA, consider using it for a charitable gift using the IRA Charitable Rollover.

Tax law allows individuals age 70½+ to make charitable gifts directly from a traditional IRA account to the Glendale College Foundation without incurring federal income tax on the withdrawal.

The IRA Charitable Rollover provides you with an excellent opportunity to make gifts during your lifetime from an asset that would be subject to multiple levels of taxation if it remained in your taxable estate.

## TO QUALIFY

You must be age 70½ or older at the time of gift.

Transfers must be made directly from a traditional IRA account by your IRA administrator to the Glendale College Foundation.

## BENEFITS

Can total up to \$100,000.

Are not included in your gross income for federal income tax purposes on your IRS Form 1040 (no charitable deduction is available, however).

Count towards your minimum required distribution for the year from your IRA.

## EXAMPLE

Mary, age 72 has a \$250,000 IRA needs to take a minimum distribution AND also wants to make a \$10,000 gift to Glendale.

1. She authorizes the administrator of her IRA to transfer \$10,000 to Glendale.
2. The \$10,000 distributed to Glendale is not subject to federal tax and will be counted toward her annual minimum required distribution.

NOTE: THIS INFORMATION IS NOT INTENDED AS LEGAL OR TAX ADVICE. FOR SUCH ADVICE, PLEASE CONSULT AN ATTORNEY OR TAX ADVISOR. FIGURES CITED IN EXAMPLES ARE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

