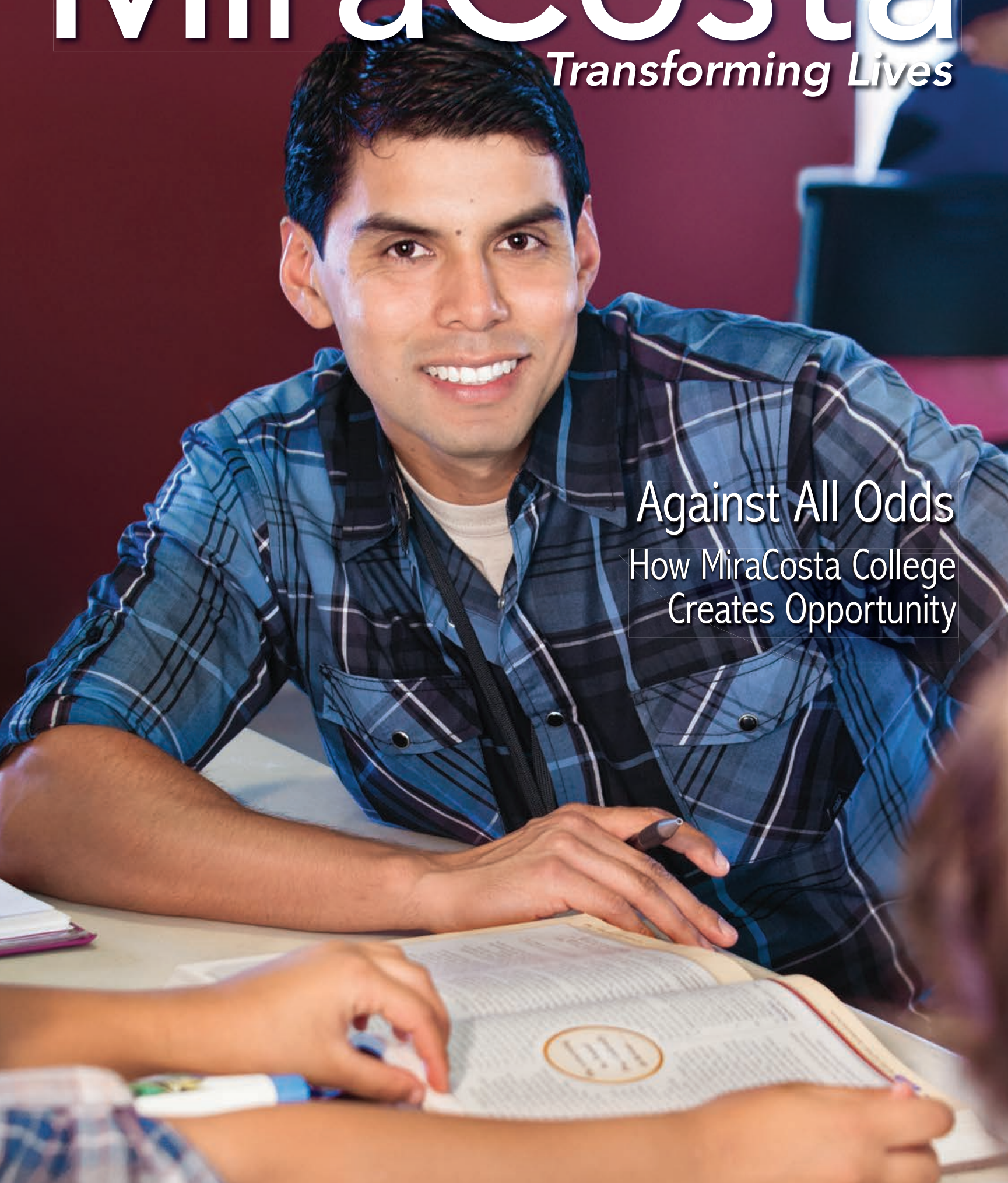


VOLUME XIV • FALL 2013

MiraCosta

Transforming Lives

Against All Odds
How MiraCosta College
Creates Opportunity



DEAR FRIEND OF MIRACOSTA COLLEGE

Opportunity. It is a powerful and transformative word filled with hope, aspiration and determination; it is at the heart of what we do here at MiraCosta College. Our students embrace hope, aspire for a bright future, and demonstrate uncompromising determination in accomplishing their educational goals. They reach for the opportunity and benefits a college education provides. Each one has a story.



MiraCosta College Superintendent/President Francisco Rodriguez bestows a degree to his daughter, Angelica, during the college's 2013 commencement ceremony.

In this edition of *MiraCosta, Transforming Lives*, you'll read the inspirational stories of everyday students who have excelled—some against all odds. Stories like those of Jonathan Weil, a high school dropout who found his academic niche with us and is now a senior consultant for Deloitte Consulting. Or Edwina Williams, who left high school to have a child, attended MiraCosta College, and is now on her way to earning a doctorate degree.

There's also Jimmy Figueroa, who didn't know how to write a proper sentence until he attended MiraCosta College. Now a UC Berkeley graduate, youth peer adviser and mentor, he has his eyes set on attending a top-tier law school—a goal I know

he will achieve. While all these students have accomplished so much to date, their greatest contributions lie ahead...and it all began right here at MiraCosta College.

For many hard-working and talented students in our local community, the opportunity to attend college can be elusive. That is why the MiraCosta College Foundation has launched the Campaign for Opportunity Scholarships. Our aim is to expand scholarship endowments by \$1.5 million so that students receive both the financial support and the +affirmation they need to pursue and achieve their goals.

Yes, scholarships affirm students. Many of our students come from humble backgrounds and close to 40 percent will be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. This campaign is especially important to me because I see the positive impact of scholarships first hand—they both remove a financial barrier and say to the student, "*Someone believes in you.*"

Thank you for your continued investment in the future of our students and our college. I hope you are as proud as I am of their unique accomplishments as well as the role you play in creating life-changing opportunities for our students.

Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Superintendent/President

MiraCosta, Transforming Lives is published by the MiraCosta College Office of Development and Foundation in collaboration with the Public Information Office. We greatly appreciate the participation of those who allowed us to tell their stories.

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On the Cover

2009 MiraCosta College graduate Jimmy Figueroa, who earned a full scholarship to UC Berkeley and is now working as a coordinator for Project REACH Libby Lake, a youth development program in Vista and Oceanside.

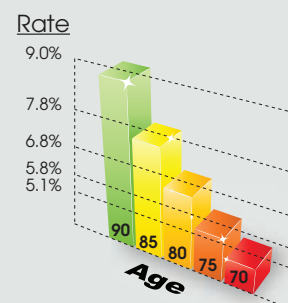
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To find out more, contact Linda Fogerson at 760.795.6775 or lfogerson@miracosta.edu.



Sample Gift Annuity Rates

Linda Fogerson, MiraCosta College
Foundation executive director

guns
drugs

"THERE WAS A POINT IN MY LIFE
WHERE I CARRIED A GUN.
THERE WAS A POINT IN MY LIFE
WHERE I WAS AROUND
DRUGS. I'VE SEEN
PEOPLE GET BEAT
UP. I'VE SEEN
PEOPLE GET SHOT."



It wasn't that long ago that Jimmy Figueroa's life was going nowhere.

The people he was hanging with were in and out of juvenile hall. Some were felled by gunfire. He figures his grade-point average in middle school was somewhere around 0.0. High school wasn't much better.

"I never went to school," he said. "I was just getting into trouble or hanging out with my friends."

Then he found MiraCosta College.

The way Figueroa tells it, his life changed after his mother began taking English classes at the college's Community Learning Center and urged him to enroll there, too. Suddenly, the high school dropout discovered a support system that was lacking all of his life, with teachers and counselors encouraging him to earn his high school diploma.

Next stop was MiraCosta College's Oceanside Campus, where Figueroa would become an honor student and earn an associate of arts degree. From there he secured a scholarship to study in the hallowed halls of UC Berkeley, where he would leave with a bachelor's degree in political science.

"MiraCosta College became my bridge to the rest of the world," Figueroa said. "It provided me with the support and the opportunity to do so much. It changed my life."

Now a coordinator for a North County youth development program called Project REACH Libby Lake, Figueroa has his sights set on a top-tier law school.

As compelling as his story is, Figueroa's odyssey is not unique. In fact, MiraCosta College provides an open door to higher education for all, ensuring that any student with desire and drive can attend college. Walk around MiraCosta College's three campuses and you can find scores of students from backgrounds similar to Figueroa's. They're learning with thousands of others who have myriad family

histories, all on their way to earning degrees that will firmly ensconce them into productive lives and well-paying careers.

"Like others who attend MiraCosta College who were never considered 'college material,' Jimmy's story is testimony to the power of resilience, self-determination, and hope," said MiraCosta College

Superintendent/President Francisco Rodriguez. "His journey is inspiring and he is a role model for so many young men and women who desire a better future."

Figueroa's challenges began shortly after his birth more than 27 years ago. His parents and an older brother were

see **Figueroa** page 4

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“The church saved me spiritually, but MiraCosta provided me with the opportunity for the first time ever to do something with my life.

They believed in me.”



living in a one-room flat the family rented in a modest North County home. One night, a married couple living in the building got into a fight. The woman fled to get her brother. He returned with a gun and opened fire, sending bullets flying over Figueroa’s crib.



Jimmy and his wife, Jenaye

The family decided it was time to move. His parents opted for a house in a working-class neighborhood near MiraCosta College’s Oceanside Campus, away from the gangs and drugs that permeated their old digs. But Figueroa’s mother and father worked from before dawn until sundown, leaving young Figueroa and his sister plenty of time to be alone. Positive role models were lacking.

“A lot of my cousins were in trouble,” he said. “A lot of my cousins were in gangs, and I thought it was cool.”

“There was a point in my life where I carried a gun,” Figueroa continued. “There was a point in my life where I was around drugs. I’ve seen people get beat up. I’ve seen people get shot.”

He was kicked out of El Camino High School by his junior year. Then his mom dragged him to MiraCosta College’s Community Learning Center. “That marked a transformation for me. That’s where I began to reform.”

He says earning his high school diploma was the hardest thing he’s done. “It was a proud moment in my life. No one thought I could do it.”

He accepted Christ. He began going to church.

A short time later he began working as a teacher’s assistant at New Venture Christian Fellowship. Then he enrolled in MiraCosta College’s credit program. It wasn’t easy; he had to take 20 units of remedial classes before he could get into the meat of his studies.

“I would go to work, go to the gym, go to school, and go study,” Figueroa said. “I read chapters over and over again before taking a test. I wanted to be ready. I was motivated.”

The hard work paid off. He earned a scholarship to UC Berkeley. He graduated in the winter of 2012. He’s waiting for his wife to graduate from San Diego State University (the first time he saw her, Jenaye was studying in the MiraCosta College cafeteria) before enrolling in law school.

Figueroa recently reflected on the odyssey that took him from the streets to UC Berkeley and will land him at the law school of his choice.

“I am very grateful for my degree from the University of California, Berkeley, but I am more than certain that no single academic accolade or professional title will ever surpass the emotional sentiment that resides within me whenever I have the opportunity to proclaim the fact that I am a proud MiraCosta alum.” ■

determination

It's about giving students a chance The Campaign for Opportunity Scholarships



Coming from all walks of life to **change lives** one student, one scholarship at a time...

It's about giving students a chance.

Jonathan Weil of Del Mar left high school after his freshman year, preferring to provide computer repair and IT services over attending high school. About the time he would have graduated from high school he enrolled at MiraCosta College and flourished. Now a graduate of USC's prestigious Marshall School of Business, Weil now works as a senior consultant for Deloitte Consulting.

When Edwina Williams of Vista found out she was pregnant, she sidelined her education. MiraCosta College was her open door to education when she decided to create a better life for herself and her son. After completing the college's adult high school program, Williams excelled in her college courses securing a place on the President's List. She is now a graduate student on the path to earning her doctorate in sociology.

To ensure that deserving students like Weil and Williams continue to have access to the life-changing benefits of higher education, the MiraCosta College Foundation is launching an ambitious effort to expand the foundation's scholarship endowments by \$1.5 million. The endeavor kicked off in August with the aim of securing \$500,000 to seed a matching fund.

"Donors who invest in this phase of the campaign will see the impact of their gift triple — for every dollar donated, we will raise an additional two dollars," said Linda Fogerson, executive director of Development and the MiraCosta College Foundation. Already, generous donors have contributed or pledged 40 percent of the goal amount.

"Scholarships remove financial barriers and provide opportunities for students that



Featured from top left to right: Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D., Janice and Erin Cook, June and Knox Williams. From middle left to right: Ron Mitchell, Doris and Bill Peoples, Linda Fogerson. From bottom left to right: Gigi Gleason, Gary Wrench, Floy and Louis Masinter.

see [Scholarships](#) page 6

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Scholarships

Scholarships Support Student Success

Denise Nealon hadn't been to school in more than 20 years. But laid off from her job as an accountant and with her marriage suddenly over, Nealon decided it was time to return. So, she enrolled at MiraCosta College intent on securing the kind of education that could help get her back into the workplace. Nealon, 42, was going to college while working part-time at MiraCosta College as a teacher's assistant and raising three daughters, 16, 13 and 11, all of whom are straight-A students. Nealon said she would like to think that her decision to go back to school while dealing with personal crises has helped motivate her daughters.

"I think seeing me work hard and going back to college inspired them," she said.

Nealon hasn't been too shabby of a student herself. She made the President's List in spring 2012, she earned a 4.0 grade-point average in her final semester, and graduated with a 3.2 overall GPA. The Soroptimist Club of Fallbrook honored her with its Women's Opportunity Award of \$575 and she received a MiraCosta College Foundation scholarship.



"Receiving a MiraCosta scholarship has made me part of a family that I am proud to be part of. Being a recipient has given me confidence and financial strength to continue to achieve my goals."

On May 17, 2013, Nealon graduated with an associate of arts degree in sociology and is en route to a new career as a marriage and family therapist. ■

Scholarships

continued from page 5

they might not otherwise have," said MiraCosta College Superintendent/President Francisco Rodriguez.

"Scholarships also provide the affirmation that hard work pays off. I have witnessed first hand how scholarships radically change the trajectory of students' lives."

The average MiraCosta College student spends \$3,500 annually on tuition and books, a cost beyond the means of many. For them, a scholarship can be the difference between staying in school and dropping out.

"I know how much scholarships meant to me when I was a young person," said Ron Mitchell, who graduated from MiraCosta College in 1974 and now serves as president of the MiraCosta College Foundation Board. "The cost of college is very expensive right now. A lot

"We have the opportunity to make a significant difference. No matter who you are, somebody helped you along the way. This allows for an opportunity to give back." Ron Mitchell

of people can't afford it. MiraCosta College provides an opportunity for a quality education and prepares a lot of kids to go on to a four-year university. But a lot of people still need help."

Contributing can have a profound impact. About 90 percent of MiraCosta College graduates stay in or return to the region after graduating, which helps to build our local economy.

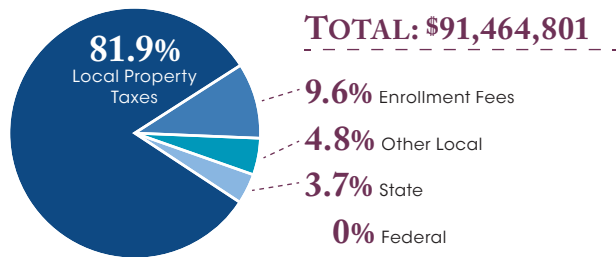
Rodriguez agrees. "Community colleges represent the most affordable, highest-quality education available to every person who works for it. We are a pathway toward a better future for individuals and our community." ■

MiraCosta College 2012–2013 Financial Report

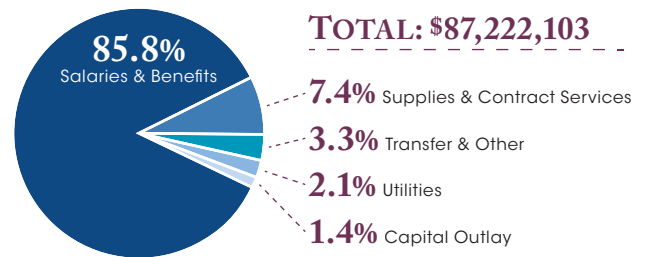
MiraCosta College and the MiraCosta College Foundation once again received an A+ audit, which came with no qualifications—a testament to the prudent financial management of the district and the foundation. Additional financial and college information can be found in the 2012–2013 Annual Report. View the report at www.miracosta.edu/annualreport or request a printed copy by emailing pio@miracosta.edu.

MiraCosta College Resource Management

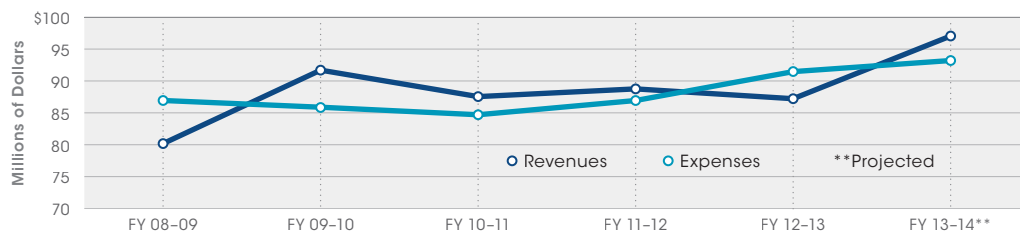
Fiscal Year 2012–2013 MiraCosta College Revenues*



Fiscal Year 2012–2013 MiraCosta College Expenses*



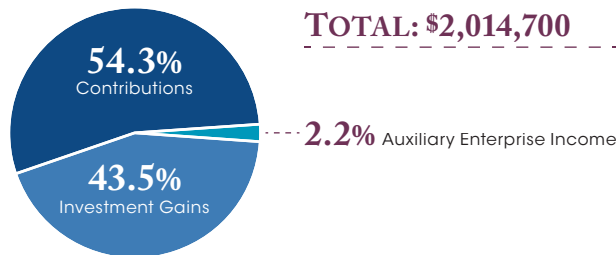
MiraCosta College Historical Revenues & Expenses



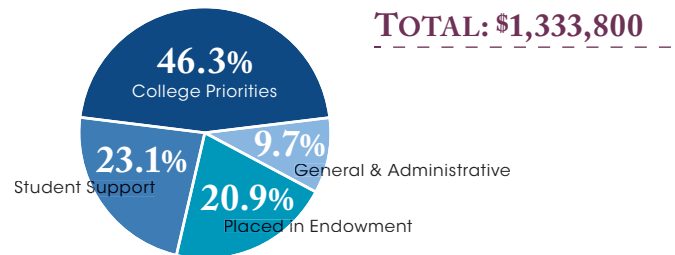
*Unrestricted General Fund, unaudited, final numbers

Foundation Resource Management

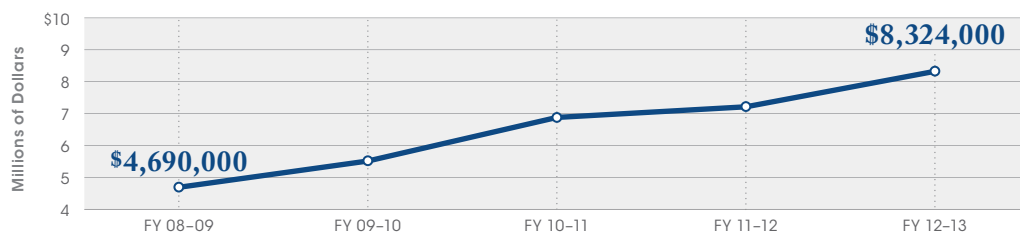
Fiscal Year 2012–2013 Foundation Revenues*



Fiscal Year 2012–2013 Foundation Allocations/Expenses*



MiraCosta College Foundation Assets Fiscal Years 2009–2013



*Unaudited, final numbers rounded

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT...
KNOX

WILLIAMS
WILLIAMS
WILLIAMS



participation in organizations throughout North County have earned him MiraCosta College's first Lifetime Achievement Award.

Williams, a Carlsbad resident and retired owner of Rayne Water Systems, knows from experience the impact community colleges can have on a young person's life. He migrated with his family to Central California from Oklahoma during the height of the Dustbowl.

"I spent three and a half years at a junior college—that's what we called it back then—trying to find myself. I'm the first in my family to go to college, and it changed my life," Williams said.

In addition to establishing a MiraCosta College endowed scholarship in honor of his son, Drue Knox Williams, and his participation as a lead donor in the foundation's Campaign for Opportunity Scholarships, Williams is also a prolific volunteer and philanthropist in our beloved community.

Some of the civic organizations that he helped build in North San Diego County include the Carlsbad Rotary, as a Paul Harris Fellow; the Mottino YMCA, as its lead volunteer fundraiser; the Carlsbad Charitable Foundation, as a founder; and St. Madeline Sophie's Center, as a board member and sometimes president.

"I t isn't where you are born, it is who you are and what you make of yourself."

Knox Williams' mother provided this insight when he was a child, and over the years, Williams has proved that through hard work, dedication and a generous spirit, anything is possible. His belief in the transformative power of education, his lifetime of dedicated community service, and his generous philanthropic

"We are honored to count Knox Williams as a treasured friend of the college and community volunteer," said Linda Fogerson, executive director of the MiraCosta College Foundation. ■

Lifetime
Achievement Award