

# Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

191 North First Street  
San Jose, California 95113  
(408) 882-2700

KIRI TORRE  
Chief Executive Officer



Contact: Michael Guevara  
Director of Human Resources  
408-882-2860  
[mguevara@scscourt.org](mailto:mguevara@scscourt.org)

Charles Montgomery  
San José City College Marketing  
408-590-4548  
[charles.montgomery@sjcc.edu](mailto:charles.montgomery@sjcc.edu)

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## **Groundbreaking Judicial Studies Program Nears First Graduation**

On June 14<sup>th</sup> a groundbreaking partnership among San José City College, the College of San Mateo, Los Angeles Harbor College, local workforce boards and the superior courts in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Monterey, Contra Costa and Sacramento counties will produce its first graduates. As part of the Judicial Careers Training Program (JCTP), the Step Up to Leadership graduation celebration will take place Thursday, June 14, 4:30 - 5:30 PM in the Jury Assembly Room of the Downtown Superior Court (191 North First Street, San Jose, 95113).

The JCTP is in the first steps of a two-year curriculum development program designed to increase the number of qualified employees in the judicial system and to provide advancement for employees with management and leadership potential. The current staffing needs of the courts in California far exceed the available qualified entry-level and higher level employees who possess the skills and experience necessary to perform the complex functions of California's courts. The goal of this partnership is to make the courts a viable and visible employer to those individuals who are interested in the legal profession or in the administration of justice. The JCTP involves close working relationships with the California superior courts and the Judicial Council's Administrative Office of the Courts in San Francisco.

The program is three-tiered. The first tier has two components, a 10-week session at the College of San Mateo focusing on entry-level positions (the Jump Start program), and a more advanced program hosted by San José City College (the Step Up to Leadership program), which focuses on providing existing supervisors and managers with leadership and administrative skills needed to operate courts on a daily basis. The second tier is the creation of a certificate program in judicial studies and the third tier is the creation of an Associate of Arts degree program. San José City College Professor Philip Crawford explains, "The Judicial Studies degree will be a component of Administration of Justice, but with emphasis on the judicial branch. Community colleges currently have programs for corrections, but the judicial branch has been neglected and misunderstood. This program is the first step towards balancing these two sides of Administration of Justice."

Students in the first tier of the program are overjoyed to be involved. Kelly Lazaga, a full time student at San José City College says, “I’m finishing up my A.A. in Administration of Justice. This program provides me an avenue to get away from the enforcement side of things and into the judicial arena. Prior to this there was only one way to go; now I can go a different avenue. This program is exactly right for my career path. This has been a wonderful opportunity that I’ve been happy to take advantage of.”

Karen Jones, a current court employee says, “One thing that I’ve noticed is that even though I am already a manager in the court system, this program helps me to sharpen up the tools I already have and correct those things I might be doing wrong. On-the-job training can only go so far, this program adds knowledge and skills to that base.”

In the initial program, fifty-six students have participated in the first tier offering. Among the thirty-two students in the Step Up to Leadership Program, four individuals have received promotions to positions of higher level complexity within the Court. A job fair was held on June 13<sup>th</sup> for the students in the Jump Start program with the goal of having many of those individuals considered for employment within one of the courts in the Bay Area.

The second offering of the programs will be in the fall. It is anticipated that both programs will once again be filled to capacity with the goal of attracting highly qualified individuals to the courts, and eventually making the court system an employer of choice within the State of California.