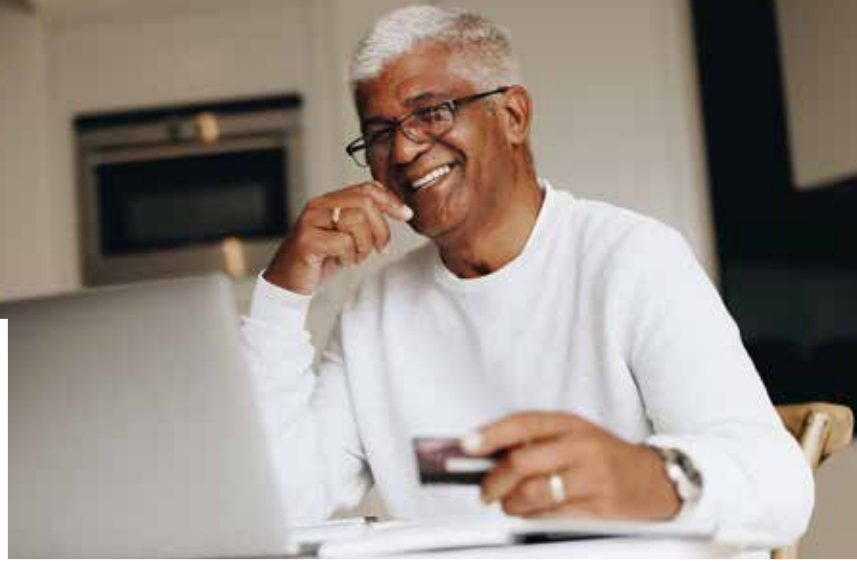


# SENIOR FOCUS

FALL 2024

## HOW TO AVOID FINANCIAL SCAMS TARGETING SENIORS



## PROMISE PARTNERS EPHRAIM AND SARA DEL POZO

CHANCE MEETING TURNS INTO  
LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO  
EACH OTHER AND COMMUNITY

## POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFERS PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING



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Questions about San Jacinto College programs and services described in this publication should be directed to the Contact Center at 281-998-6150. Comments or questions about the publication can be directed to the San Jacinto College External Relations Department at 281-998-6152.

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**Visit San Jacinto College online at [sanjac.edu](http://sanjac.edu).  
Call us at 281-998-6150.**



Follow us on Facebook @SanJacintoCollege and Instagram @SanJacCollege.

#### About San Jacinto College

Surrounded by monuments of history, evolving industries, maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorrow, San Jacinto College has served the people of East Harris County, Texas, since 1961. The College is one of the top 10 community colleges in the nation as designated by the Aspen Institute and was named an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction in 2020. The College is a Hispanic-Serving Institution that spans five campuses, serving approximately 41,000 credit and non-credit students annually. It offers more than 200 degrees and certificates across eight major areas of study that put students on a path to transfer to four-year institutions or enter the workforce. The College is fiscally sound, holding bond ratings of AA+ by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's.

For more information about San Jacinto College, visit [sanjac.edu](http://sanjac.edu).

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# NEWS & NOTES

FROM AROUND THE COLLEGE

## San Jac offers new programs

Beginning in fall 2024, San Jacinto College is offering several new degrees and certificates:

- **Criminal Justice, Associate of Arts:**  
Transfers to a criminal justice bachelor's degree program
- **Magnetic Resonance Imaging, Associate of Applied Science:**  
Teaches MRI procedures and patient care, with hands-on clinical rotations
- **Mental Health Addiction Study, Associate of Applied Science:**  
Prepares students as mental health technicians, combining substance use disorder counseling and prevention certificates
- **Sociology, Associate of Arts:**  
Focuses on social interaction, change, and group behavior
- **Barbering, Certificate of Technology:**  
A 1,000-hour program to become a licensed Class A barber in Texas, covering shaving, clipper cutting, men's grooming, and facials
- **Dance Instructor, Certificate of Technology:**  
Offers skills and experience for a career in dance instruction

Scan the QR code to learn about all San Jac programs:



## Bionat tapped to lead external relations

Christian Bionat was recently named San Jacinto College's vice chancellor of external relations, overseeing marketing, fundraising, and government affairs.

Previously, Bionat served as vice president of public policy and advocacy at the Greater Houston Partnership, where he developed advocacy strategies and managed legislative initiatives. He also held roles as district director for U.S. Congressman Randy Weber and deputy chief of staff for former U.S. Congressman Pete Olson.

In addition to being a San Jac alumnus, Bionat holds a Bachelor of Science in political science from Sam Houston State University and a master's degree in public administration from Penn State University. He is a member of the U.S. Army Reserve.

## San Jac vying for \$1M Aspen Prize

The Aspen Institute named San Jacinto College as a finalist for the 2025 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. This \$1 million award recognizes the nation's top community colleges for student success and equitable outcomes.

The finalists stand out among more than 1,000 community colleges nationwide as having high and improving levels of student success, as well as equitable outcomes for Black and Hispanic students and those from lower-income backgrounds.

San Jac is often recognized because of strong industry partnerships that influence curriculum development, facilities, student support, and employment. The College also offers a comprehensive transfer pathway and consistent advising that guide students through agreements, degree plans, financial aid, and scholarships.

San Jac has ranked as an Aspen Institute Rising Star (2017), Finalist (2019 and 2023), and Finalist with Distinction (2021).

## National Night Out set for Oct. 8

Join the San Jacinto College Police Department for its National Night Out celebration Tuesday, Oct. 8.

The free event will be from 3:30-6:30 p.m. at the College's South Campus, 13735 Beamer Rd., Houston, Texas 77089.

This is a great opportunity for community members to meet the San Jac police and other departments in a fun, friendly atmosphere. There will be food, games, races, and prizes.

According to the National Association of Town Watch, the annual National Night Out campaign enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a sense of community. For more information about the San Jac event, contact [brandy.witsberger@sjcd.edu](mailto:brandy.witsberger@sjcd.edu).



*Courtesy of National Association of Town Watch*

# HOW TO AVOID FINANCIAL SCAMS TARGETING SENIORS

■ By Melissa Trevizo



Financial scams targeting older adults are increasing. In 2022 alone, U.S. citizens over 60 reported more than 88,262 complaints of fraud, which resulted in \$3.1 billion in losses — about \$10 per person in the U.S.

Although seniors are at risk no matter their financial status, low-income seniors feel the impact even more.

How can you defend yourself against online scammers? Jason Scott from San Jacinto College's office of cybersecurity shares scamming trends and prevention tips.

## TRENDING SCAMS

### 1. IRS Audit Scam:

- **What it looks like:** Calls or emails claiming you are being audited.
- **What to do:** If the IRS audits you, you'll receive an official letter — not an email, text, or social media message requesting your personal or financial information. If you're suspicious, call the U.S. Treasury inspector general for tax administration at **1-800-366-4484**.

### 2. Social Security Scam:

- **What it looks like:** Imposters call you, claiming your Social Security number is suspended due to suspicious activity. They ask for confirmation of the number or demand money, threatening to freeze accounts if you don't act quickly. They use robocalls and ask you to "press 1" to speak to a fake support representative. Or they use caller ID spoofing to appear legitimate and trick you into providing personal information.
- **What to do:** If you receive a questionable call, hang up and report the call at [oig.ssa.gov/report](https://oig.ssa.gov/report).

### 3. Spoofing Bank Emails:

- **What it looks like:** Claiming your account is in overdraft or experiencing some other issue. Scammers are good at copying the look of your bank's emails, tricking you into believing they are legitimate.
- **What to do:** Verify by checking the email address and contacting your bank directly.

### 4. Tech Support Scam:

- **What it looks like:** Scammers send pop-up messages or call to say there's a problem with your computer or phone. They may offer to fix it for a fee, while installing virus or tracking software.
- **What to do:** Be careful about what you download and install.

### 5. Ransomware:

- **What it looks like:** You receive an email threatening to release your secrets unless you pay money.
- **What to do:** Don't fall for these threats. Take your computer to an expert to check for such software.

### 6. Romance Scams:

- **What it looks like:** Scammers pose as romantic interests or friends through social media or dating sites. They may ask for money, especially if you've never met in person.
- **What to do:** Don't send money to someone you haven't met.

## TIPS TO KEEP YOU SAFE

- **Remember who's in control — you.** Scammers may threaten you. If a business, person, or even grandchild contacts you, check whom you're really dealing with. Avoid panicking or reacting. Stop and call a number you know is real to verify.
- **Stick to secure sites.** Use secure business websites (look for a lock in the web address bar).
- **Vary your passwords and never share them.** Create a unique password for every account so someone who hacks your email, for example, can't access your banking and credit card accounts. Remember, a reputable business will never ask for your password over the phone.
- **Stay involved and active.** Find a local senior center or join a club. Isolation makes you an easier target for scammers. [SeniorNet.org](https://SeniorNet.org) offers computer training to help bridge technology gaps.

While scamming statistics can be alarming, remember that you have the power to safeguard your finances and personal information. By staying informed about common scams and following these tips, you can reduce your risk of falling victim to fraud.



Help is available! If you or someone you know may be a scam victim, report potential abuse at [justice.gov/elderjustice/find-help-or-report-abuse](https://justice.gov/elderjustice/find-help-or-report-abuse).



# STEP BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM WITH CONFIDENCE

■ By Courtney Morris

If you're an adult student coming to San Jacinto College for a new degree or enrolling for the first time, you've taken the most important step: You've stopped waiting and started doing.

Whether you're 55 or 85, San Jac experts share how to step back into the classroom with confidence.

## Q: Is it too late for me to return to school?

**Jose Nicolas, veteran services coordinator:** It's never too late. In fact, we often do our best learning as adults because we can reference our life experiences during our academic journey, making it easier to grasp new subjects.

## Q: How can I set clear academic and personal goals?

**Adam Rogers, program advisor coordinator:** Goal setting comes down to prioritizing — the ability to say “no” and be realistic. Have an honest conversation with your support network about your academic pursuits and any sacrifices needed. Make sure your long-term goals are reinforced by shorter ones. If your long-term goal is to earn your degree, there should be shorter-term goals for the year, semester, month, and week.

## Q: How do I manage my time?

**Dr. Joanie DeForest, college prep department chair:** Figure out how much time needs to be dedicated to study, family, and work (or other responsibilities). If this adds up to more than 24 hours in a day, adjust your schedule. If taking two classes is out of the question, take one and focus on doing well.

## Q: What if I'm not tech savvy?

**Roselle Helms, director of technology effectiveness:** The technology support page offers helpful tools like applying for the student loaner laptop program. Or visit our new campus

service desks if you're unsure where to start. We can help meet your technology needs, whether it's connecting to the Wi-Fi or verifying system updates are current.

► Learn more: [sanjac.edu/support/technology-support](https://sanjac.edu/support/technology-support)

## Q: What study techniques can help me retain what I'm learning?

**Erika Hernandez, Student Success Center director:**

1. Form a study group: Classmates can offer different perspectives and study tips.
2. Take notes: Pay attention to the class and study material. If you don't understand something, ask questions before, during, or after class.
3. Visit the Student Success Center: We offer face-to-face and online tutoring services and areas to study.
4. Learn more about tutoring: [ssctutoring@sjcd.edu](mailto:ssctutoring@sjcd.edu)

## Q: How can I prioritize my health while keeping up with classes?

**Robert Murray, director of mental health counseling:** Studying, working, and managing relationships can feel overwhelming. Self-care is paramount. It's important to notice when you need to step away from whatever you're doing, regather your thoughts, then return to the activity with a clear head.

If you're having difficulty with your class, reach out to your professor. If you're experiencing depression, anxiety, etc., please reach out to a mental health counselor in the welcome centers at South, Central, and North Campuses.

## Q: How can I transition into a new career?

**Jennifer Cerda, career and transfer coordinator:** Reflect on your passions and skills. Research industries and careers that interest you. Look into job market trends, required skills, and potential growth opportunities.

Identify the transferable skills you've acquired throughout your education and previous work that can be applied to your new career. Consider if you need more education or training to bridge any knowledge or skill gaps for your new career.



## CONCLUSION

Finally, don't forget to celebrate you. Once you've earned that certificate or degree, walk across the commencement stage to accept your diploma!



# TIDWELL OVERSEES LAUNCH OF SAN JAC'S NEW ONLINE CAMPUS

■ By Neesha Hosein



Dr. Ken Tidwell

San Jacinto College will launch its newest campus, San Jac Online, in fall 2025 with Dr. Ken Tidwell as the chief officer for online learning.

Tidwell joined San Jac in March 2020, a week before the COVID-19 shutdowns. Over the past four years, he has served as the dean of workforce development and the interim associate vice chancellor for the Maritime Campus.

Tidwell's journey into online learning began in the early 2000s when he taught distance learning courses in the Air Force. His passion for online education continued as he transitioned into community colleges, where he primarily taught online courses and served as dean for arts and sciences and online learning at another institution.

Tidwell led online learning from design, management, and faculty collaboration in his first instructional leadership role. In 2014, his doctorate program included educational

technology with research focused on predicting online student success applying self-regulated learning theory traits.

"When the College announced this new direction for the district and the new leadership role, I jumped at the opportunity to return to something I love," he said. "Additionally, I have never stopped teaching online regardless of my administrative role."

In the last 15 years, Tidwell has taught online students at three community colleges and one university. The experience has allowed him to stay up to date on technological advances and research in student learning and "provides a strong toolbox to partner, collaborate, and lead online learning at San Jac to accomplish our mission — a focus on student success, academic progress, university transfer, and employment."

## Collaboration is key

The San Jac Online implementation team has more than 20 departments and groups across the district.

Tasks include creating a strategic course and enrollment plan for online students, determining personnel needs, and implementing a transition plan for staff moving to the online campus. Setting quality expectations for online teaching, identifying online teaching and learning professional development resources, and establishing marketing plans and system integrations to support online student services are other important actions in the planning process.

"While we journey in this implementation and creation phase, we lean into the activity with all its questions and unknowns by trusting the system, embracing the process, and seeing the good San Jac Online will bring to our district," Tidwell said. "I want us to love and have fun creating an online campus for our students."

## Online learning becomes norm

When Tidwell arrived at San Jac in 2020, he was surprised by limited online learning options, given the national growth in community college distance learning from 2014 to 2020. The

pandemic forced all Texas students into online learning, compelling faculty and support staff to adapt quickly.

"COVID led to San Jac and Texas catching up with the rest of the nation regarding online learning," he said. "Now students know they can do it. It gives students a little more decision-making power for how they choose their college experience to support their life needs and goals."

Tidwell believes this is a good thing: Online learning is not replacing traditional classroom options but becoming one part of a variety of learning options.

## Why is San Jac the best choice for online learning?

San Jac Online offers 50 certificates and degrees fully online, providing cost-effective tuition without commuting costs. The College supports students, aiming to grow and add new programs while ensuring learners are never alone by integrating their home, family, and workplace into the San Jac community.

"We will come out the other end of fall 2025 with an enhanced learning environment for all students, a distinguished and stronger College for our team, and an increased value to the communities we serve in an ever-growing digital world," Tidwell said.

Scan the QR code to learn more about San Jac Online:





# POLICE DEPARTMENT

## OFFERS RAD PERSONAL SAFETY TRAINING

■ By Jacquelynn Conger

The San Jacinto College Police Department is now offering free RAD (rape, aggression, defense) training to students, staff, and community members. This program provides you with self-defense techniques to protect against potential attackers and enhance situational awareness.

RAD covers both short-term self-defense education and physical skill mastery. You can pursue short-term training in a progressive building block format while enjoying RAD's trademark Lifetime Return and Practice Policy, which ensures you can return and practice for free, reinforcing your skills over a lifetime. RAD programs worldwide honor this policy.

"RAD is a program of proven self-defense tactics and skills to equip you with the knowledge and skill set to properly defend yourself and loved ones, if needed," said Sabrina Naulings, San Jac police chief.

Certified RAD instructors use specialized simulation techniques and equipment. RAD is also the only self-defense program supported by the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the National Academy of Defense Education, the National Self-Defense Institute, and Redman Training Gear.

Participants can attend a one-time class with the opportunity to attend additional training. Open classes are available to ages 15 and older, with



opportunities for children's group classes. Participants will receive a student manual and should consider attending refresher courses regularly. While there are no differences in the levels of offerings, each class will present different scenarios with increasing intensity.

"Safety and survival require a clear-cut course of action," Naulings said. "RAD provides effective options for individuals to take an active role in their own self-defense and emotional well-being."

► For more information about this free training, contact Lieutenant Darrell Hollie at [darrell.hollie@sjcd.edu](mailto:darrell.hollie@sjcd.edu).



# FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP:



## DR. VERONICA JAMMER'S INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEY IN NURSING EDUCATION

■ By Jacquelynn Conger

Dr. Veronica Jammer, San Jacinto College RN-to-BSN department chair, has dedicated over three decades to nursing and education. Beginning her journey at the College in 1988, Jammer has contributed significantly through her teaching and leadership roles.

Since 2020, Jammer has led the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, guiding its development and implementation, but she started at the College as a part-time faculty member. She has taught courses from fundamentals of nursing and medical/surgical nursing to pediatrics and leadership/management. Her previous leadership roles included associate degree nursing department chair and health science dean.

Jammer's path to nursing was shaped by early experiences and a natural inclination to care for others. Her first nursing experience happened at age 5 on Christmas Eve.

"My baby brother hit his head and began bleeding profusely," said Jammer. "I jumped into action and stopped the bleeding. The rest is history."

Her role as the oldest of five children also ingrained in her the responsibilities of caregiving, which further motivated her to pursue nursing. She started her vocational nursing education at 15. She continued her journey and earned a BSN, MSN, nurse practitioner, and finally a Ph.D.

"I have always appreciated education, especially knowing that not so many years ago it was illegal for people of color to read and write," Jammer said. "I also feel a sense of responsibility to let others know that a little girl from the Fifth Ward in Houston can provide a snapshot of what can happen with a made-up mind, persistence, resilience, and commitment to excellence."

Both challenges and joys have marked Jammer's professional journey. The loss of her parents, best friend, and two aunts during her doctoral

program was a significant hardship. However, she finds immense joy in students' success, witnessing their progression through semesters, graduation, and their workforce contributions.

"I have experienced, on occasion, previous students who were assigned as my nurse or a family member's nurse," said Jammer. "The professionalism, compassion, caring, and competency demonstrated by these professionals are exceptional."

Jammer's own journey has inspired many students. She shares her experiences, including the challenges of balancing family, work, and education and even failing a class in the final semester of her BSN program. But her story instills them with hope and encouragement.

"I was the only one who could fix it," she said.

Outside her professional responsibilities, Jammer is actively involved in various organizations, including Sigma Theta Tau, the Texas Nurses Association, and more. Her interests include women's health, children's/adolescent health, and health disparities in minority populations. She also volunteers with mentoring young women, The Fellowship of Purpose Church's Flourish Women's Ministry, Congregational Care Ministry, and Senior Saints Ministry.

Jammer's hobbies include reading, travel, and shopping, and she treasures time spent with her family, including her three children and three grandchildren. She attributes her successful journey

to her strong relationship with God.

"The key for me was to trust God... 'God does not give us a vision without provision to achieve a goal,'" she said.

A story of resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment to nursing and education, Jammer is carving a legacy at San Jac. She continues to demonstrate the profound impact one person can make on a community.

“My baby brother hit his head and began bleeding profusely. I jumped into action and stopped the bleeding. The rest is history.”

# PROMISE PARTNERS EPHRAIM AND SARA DEL POZO

## CHANCE MEETING TURNS INTO LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER AND COMMUNITY

■ By Courtney Morris

“A couple meets in a bar” sounds like the beginning of a cheesy joke. But after that chance meeting, Ephraim and Sara del Pozo are still together four decades later.

Despite a rocky start that included one of them standing up the other for a first date, their relationship defines commitment — from exchanging wedding vows 38 years ago to investing in their community today, including San Jacinto College.

The del Pozos number among the newest Promise Partners helping in-district high school seniors attend San Jac debt-free.

For Ephraim and Sara, giving back has often revolved around youth and education. Early in

their marriage, they helped build a medical clinic and served in a vacation Bible school program in Mexico. They also sponsored Head Start early childhood program classrooms, providing Christmas gifts for underprivileged kids.

Recently, they established the del Pozo Family Community Fund to sponsor scholarship-raising activities.

Both understand the tears and sweat behind finishing degrees. After starting at a university, Ephraim switched to part-time San Jac classes while working in refineries. He attended off and on for several years, grateful that professors understood his work schedule.

“I was only able to take a class or two at a time,” he said. “I tell people that’s what it takes: Sometimes you’ve got to put one foot in front of the other.”

Around 1990, he transferred to the University of Houston-Clear Lake only a few classes shy of a business and accounting associate degree. After earning his bachelor’s degree in accounting and passing the CPA exam, he received a J.D. degree from South Texas College of Law, where he remains involved.

Sara, a single mother when they met, finally mustered the courage to tell Ephraim she had dropped out of high school to care for her baby.

“You know, he didn’t judge me, but he did encourage me,” she said.

She got her GED at San Jac, then — like Ephraim — took a here-and-there approach to college classes. In 2008, she graduated from San Jac with her associate degree in psychology.

“I finally walked across that stage, and that stage meant more to me than probably anyone else,” she said.

Today, Ephraim specializes in energy finance law at a Houston law firm. Sara went on to earn a psychology bachelor’s degree — expertise that came in handy while managing an industrial staffing company.

Both reconnected with San Jac after an active alumna invited them to the Hollywood Nights Gala this past May. There, they decided to become Promise Partners.

“I think [the Promise @ San Jac Scholarship] is a wonderful program,” Sara said. “I love that it’s going to continue. Everyone that can get involved should.”

If anyone can understand the challenges that stand in the way of a degree, it’s the del Pozos. They hope their gift reaches “untapped potential” — students who would otherwise choose not to go to college.

“We need to help students become successful,” Ephraim said. “It creates a better fabric for the whole community economically, educationally, professionally, socially, and in all other ways.”

The Promise @ San Jac Scholarship covers in-district high school graduates’ tuition and books for up to three years.



Scan the QR code to learn more about becoming a Promise Partner:



# SAN JAC HAPPENINGS



## Sept. 30

Registration opens for winter mini and spring

## Oct. 9-Nov. 6

Guest Artists: Vanessa Monokian and Tina Hernandez

*Varies*

Central Campus Gallery, Davis Library (C21.163) | Contact [carmen.champion@sjcd.edu](mailto:carmen.champion@sjcd.edu)

## Oct. 16-19

“The SpongeBob Musical”

7:30 p.m..

\$15 general admission | Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C12)

## Oct. 18

6th Annual Senior Wellness Expo\*

9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Health resources, food, giveaways, and more | Central Campus, Interactive Learning Center (C1.101)

## Oct. 20

“The SpongeBob Musical” matinee

2:30 p.m.

\$15 general admission | Central Campus, Slocomb Auditorium (C12)

## Oct. 24-26 & Oct. 31-Nov. 2

“The Pits” World Premiere

*Varies*

Get free tickets at [sjcstheatreilm.ludus.com](http://sjcstheatreilm.ludus.com) | South Campus, Flickinger Fine Arts Center, Black Box Theatre (\$15)



## Nov. 25-Dec. 1

Thanksgiving Break

*Closed*

All campuses and online

## Dec. 5-7 & 12-14

“Santa’s Christmas Magic”

7:30 p.m.

\$15 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)



## Dec. 8 & 15

“Santa’s Christmas Magic” Matinee Performances

2:30 p.m.

\$15 general admission | Central Campus, Powell Arena Theatre (C13)

## Dec. 13

Fall Commencement

7 p.m.

Minute Maid Park

## Dec. 23-Jan. 1

Winter Break

*Closed*

No non-instructional activity

\*For community engagement events, register at [community.engagement@sjcd.edu](mailto:community.engagement@sjcd.edu) or 281-478-2786. All times and event schedules listed are subject to change. For more information, visit [sanjac.edu/calendar](http://sanjac.edu/calendar).



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**NORTH CAMPUS**  
5800 UVALDE RD.  
HOUSTON, TX 77049

**MARITIME CAMPUS**  
3700 OLD HWY. 146  
LA PORTE, TX 77571

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