

# Welcome to College of Alameda!

*Who we are, what we do, and what we promise...*

*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... - César Chávez*

*Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.. - Martin Luther King Jr.*

*How we envision the outcomes of learning tells us how we need to choreograph the dance. - Ruth Stiehl*

**College of Alameda (COA) is one of four Peralta Community Colleges.** The Peralta Community College District was established in 1964 with its roots in the history of public education in Oakland. The name Peralta reflects the Spanish land grant to Sergeant Luis Maria Peralta in August 1820 of Rancho San Antonio, upon which the six cities that comprise the Peralta Community College District are now located. We primarily serve the residents of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland and Piedmont.

## Vision

**The Vision of College of Alameda** is that we are a diverse, supportive, empowering learning community for seekers of knowledge. We are committed to providing a creative, ethical and inclusive environment in which students develop their abilities as thinkers, workers and citizens of the world.

## Values

**We use this vision to choreograph three central themes** in our quest for “learning excellence” and services to students. These three themes are:

- *Academic Excellence*
- *Budgetary Competence, and*
- *Community Engagement*

We call these “*our ABCs*” emphasizing crucial success indicators for our students in achieving an enhanced capacity to pursue their dreams! Noting the Community College Movement all over the world emerged out of the American focus upon “community” and “citizenship” in higher education; we draw the meaning of a community college degree as defined for us by California Education Code: Title 5. From this, *what you should be able to do with what you learn here is outlined in three general areas that define a comprehensive community college education that prepares students in terms of:*

- ***Foundational Knowledge and Learning*** – college courses that prepare people for transfer to higher levels of education or simply to understand our place in the world and the world in and of itself
- ***Critical Thinking and Applied Skills*** – an overall set of life “survival” skills necessary to be a productive, employed, and effective citizen including applied learning in the areas of ***Career and Technical Education (CTE)***
- ***Personal Enrichment and Efficacy*** – college courses that develop the life skill sets for pursuing well being and an enhanced quality of life

At College of Alameda, “ABCs” means we integrate our core values in all we do to help students in their efforts to realize their dreams. How are these crucial success indicators emphasized in service to our learning community?

**Academic Excellence** means we validate our work based on the assessment of our students' success as defined by our Institutional Learning Outcomes. We seek to meet these goals with a commitment to innovative and integrated curriculum built upon collaborative partnerships within our organization between student services & academic instruction, seeking to create opportunities for applied learning (such as service learning, civic engagement and cross-discipline learning communities), all within in the context of a psychologically and intellectually safe environment that encourages risk-taking and celebrates our successes.

**Budgetary Competence** means all our services need to be offered creatively within the real-world constraints of our budget. We are all a part of this process of being responsible stewards for the resources entrusted to us by the community we serve. We strive to not bring ideas to the table without first asking how this fits within our resource limits, seeking to find creative ways to supplement our budget. In this we also seek to find creative ways to do what we want to do within the context of our vision of success – not merely a shrunken vision of what we have always done. We also seek to serve our students with convenient and creative scheduling allowing us to offer courses that are productive, creative & experimental. We look for holistic offerings that complement our existing programs, our sister colleges within the Peralta Community College District, and that play to the unique strengths of College of Alameda.

**Community Engagement** means we seek to embody *a Spirit of Collegiality*, actively working towards a student-centered philosophy that embodies a community of scholar practitioners committed to serving our students with professional and collegial competence. We aspire to hold one another accountable to clear standards of success and excellence – as defined by our Institutional Learning Outcomes – utilizing a process of evaluation and assessment, leading to improvement of college programs & services. In this we use tried and tested models of academic excellence that work! **COA's Learning Communities** (Adelante, APASS, Amandla, Community Leadership and Public Service) are all examples of successful programs that exemplify our commitment to students. We focus on a holistic collaborative approach to learning; one in which learning happens both in- and out- of the classroom. We recognize our frontline staff members are no less important than our administration and our faculty cannot function without either. We actively promote and support students as equal partners in shared governance through the *Associated Students of College of Alameda* (ASCOA) and our *Campus Life Council*. This one team approach, comprised of students, staff and faculty, seeks to de-emphasize distinctions between the stakeholders; we are all learners, each working towards a common goal: *student success!*

In line with our definition of crucial student success indicators, "*Learning at College of Alameda*" follows the notion that an Associate's degree from a comprehensive community college should embody, "a coherent and integrated pattern of learning experiences (to) prepare students (as) educated persons with a broad range of knowledge to evaluate and appreciate the physical environment, the culture, and the society in which they live; to be able to examine the values inherent in proposed solutions to major social problems; and to be able to participate effectively in their resolution." Title 5 emphasizes the role of education in preparing "citizens with a broad educational foundation, to develop a populace that can participate effectively in all domains of society: civically, economically, and politically."

## Mission

Therefore, it is the **Mission of College of Alameda** to serve the educational needs of its diverse community by providing comprehensive and flexible programs and resources that empower students to achieve their goals.

Following Title 5, the faculty, staff, and administration at College of Alameda strive to accomplish our mission in a more complex world with challenges unique to living in the 21st Century. We meet these challenges offering courses in three areas of focus: career technical education, liberal arts and sciences, and personal enrichment. It is by being "comprehensive" in this way that College of Alameda offers students critical life skills and tools to live more effectively in the world.

*Our job is not to make up anybody's mind, but to make the agony of decision-making so intense you can escape only by thinking.- Fred W. Friendly*

The College of Alameda and Peralta Educational Master Plan commits us as a comprehensive learning college to serve people in five general areas:

- We seek to **advance student access and success**; being sensitive to the diverse and complex realities of the 21st Century World.
- We **engage our communities and partners** (e.g. with various industries and among non-profit and other educational organizations). We do this to build foundations of learning upon which what is learned enables all of us to live with one another in a manner which builds community.
- Through **programs of distinction** we seek to support students in achieving their life goals what ever they may be (transfer, employment, or personal enrichment). We recognize that for many of the people we serve, they may be the first in their families to attend college and for some this may be their highest level of education. Consequently;
- For all the people who count on us, College of Alameda is committed to provide the highest quality educational experience we can through the **creation of a culture of innovation and collaboration**.
- As wise stewards of our resources we **ensure financial health** of the organization and **environmentally sustainable practices in all our operations**.

In meeting all of these commitments, College of Alameda supports student success by empowering students with the values, knowledge, and skills to succeed in becoming engaged global citizens. These qualities enable them to be involved in the creation of a future that is socially just, economically viable, ecologically sound, and promotes a healthy quality of life and holistic well-being.

We assess the achievement of our goals in the success of our students when they are able to apply what they learn in the classroom to the efforts needed to achieve their academic, professional, and personal aspirations! Therefore, the criteria of success by which we assess ourselves and our mission are found in our **Institutional Learning Outcomes**. These meet the vision of a “comprehensive community college education” as put forward in Title 5, and are framed as the answer to a question:

*As a result of their learning experiences at College of Alameda,  
What are students able to do out in the world?*

- **Solve problems and make decisions in life and work using critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, community resources, and civil engagement.**
- **Use technology and written and oral communication to discover, develop, and relate critical ideas in multiple environments.**
- **Exhibit aesthetic reflection to promote, participate and contribute to human development, expression, creativity, and curiosity.**
- **Engage in respectful interpersonal communications, acknowledging ideas and values of diverse individuals that represent different ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender expressions.**
- **Accept personal, civic, social and environmental responsibility in order to become a productive local and global community member.**

Finally, we offer all our services guided by the highest standards of research-based professional practice by evaluating what we do to continuously improve our educational services rooted in the findings of fact.

*Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence. ~ John Adams*