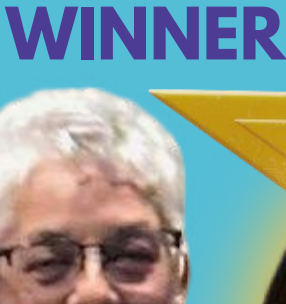
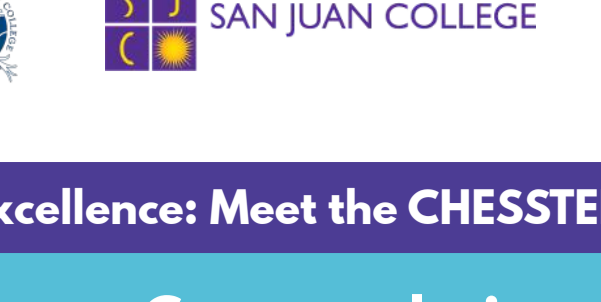


CHESS Connection



September 2025, Issue 2

Honoring Excellence: Meet the CHESSTER Award Recipients

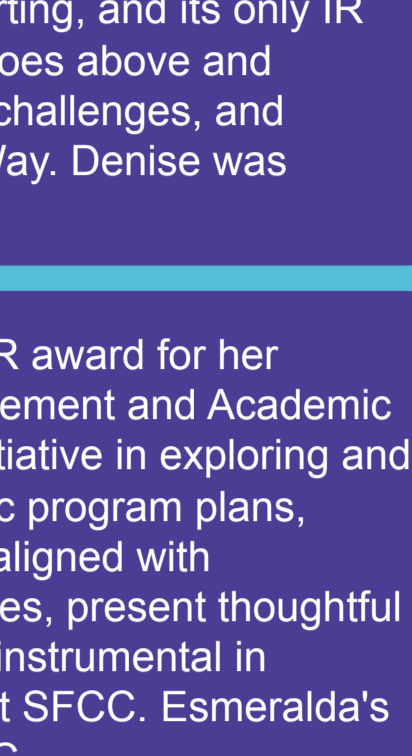
Congratulations to the CHESSTER AWARD WINNERS



Top Row (Left to Right):
Alicia Rendon (CHES),
Kari Smith (CCC),
Denise Gibson (LCC), &
Esmeralda Martin (SFCC)

Bottom Row (Left to Right):
Lenora Neu (CNM),
Sam Nelson (CNM),
Jay Julakanti (Workday),
& Tracey Beasley (SJC)

The CHESSTER Awards recognized individuals on the Workday Student SIS project who were nominated by their peers for their exceptional contributions over the past six months. Awards were presented to outstanding team members from CHES member colleges, the CHES organization, and Workday.



Alicia Rendon, CHES, received the CHESSTER Award because she is instrumental in keeping the Workstreams focused and motivated. She expertly manages and mitigates risks by fostering a collaborative environment that empowers every team member to contribute their best work. Alicia's dedication goes beyond mere project delivery; she builds lasting relationships and elevates her Workstream's performance. Alicia's nomination came from Marcos Garcia, CHES.

Kari Smith, CCC, received the CHESSTER Award because she exemplifies dedication, leadership, and positivity through her work as a lead on multiple SIS Implementation Project workstreams and as CCC's Testing Advocate. Her expertise, professionalism, and uplifting presence make her an invaluable resource across campus and a truly deserving recipient. Kari's nomination came from Robin Kuykendall, CCC, and Brandon Finney, CCC.

Denise Gibson, LCC, received the CHESSTER Award for her outstanding leadership and dedication to the CHES and SIS projects. As Luna's sole representative for Data Conversion and Reporting, and its only IR and Reporting staff member, Denise consistently goes above and beyond—supporting colleagues, solving technical challenges, and embodying the collaborative spirit of the CHES Way. Denise was nominated by Dani Day, CHES.

Esmeralda Martin, SFCC, received the CHESSTER award for her outstanding contributions to the Curriculum Management and Academic Foundation workstream. She consistently takes initiative in exploring and evaluating multiple options when building academic program plans, ensuring that our decisions are well-informed and aligned with institutional goals. Her ability to anticipate challenges, present thoughtful solutions, and collaborate across teams has been instrumental in strengthening the program development process at SFCC. Esmeralda's nomination came from Bernadette Gonzales, SFCC.

Lenora Neu, CNM, received the CHESSTER Award because she has shown considerable knowledge of the Workday system, as evidenced by her Workday Jeopardy! win at the San Juan on-site. She has been a critical component of the Security workstream and has continued to support the team with knowledge transfer as we shift her focus back to reporting. She's also a valuable member of the data conversion workstream. Lenora is always ready to ask clarifying questions to broaden not only her own understanding but also the team's discussions. Lenora's nomination came from Zac Shank, CNM.

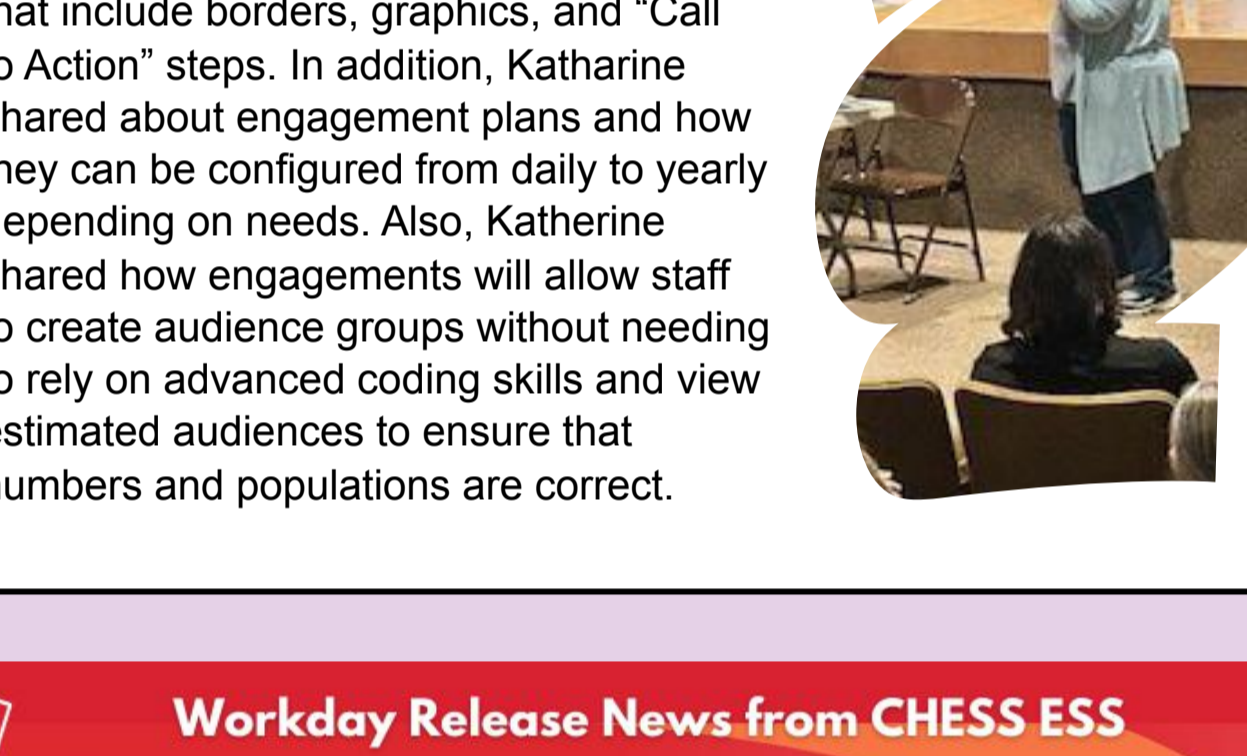
Sam Nelson, CNM, received the CHESSTER Award because she has a wealth of knowledge in both the functional and technical aspects of graduation, transcript evaluation, and curriculum management at CNM, and has been a primary contributor while navigating our legacy data for Data Conversion. She is also playing a huge part in configuring the future state of these areas in her functional workstreams, all while developing related reports and contributing to related integration discussions. I love working with Sam because she is always excited to tackle a new reporting challenge together and/or share reporting breakthroughs despite already being pulled in all directions. She's an invaluable member of our team and deserves this recognition! Sam's nomination came from Lisa Smith, CNM.

Jay Julakanti, Workday, was nominated for his exceptional leadership and impact on the Reporting Workstream for the CHES Student Implementation. From the start, Jay has fostered a positive, collaborative environment and consistently supported both college developers and Workday peers. His proactive approach to risk management and problem-solving has kept the project on track, while his guidance continues to drive progress. Jay's dedication, approachability, and expertise make him a tremendous asset to the team and a well-deserving CHESSTER Award recipient. Jay's nomination came from Nick Taousakis, Workday.

Tracey Beasley, SFCC, has been an outstanding member of the Data Conversion team since the start of the project. Her ability to bridge technical and functional teams, locate critical legacy data, and support partners across CHES has been instrumental in ensuring clean, reliable data. Tracey's dedication—often working off-hours to prepare, consult, and troubleshoot—makes her an invaluable contributor to the success of the Workday SIS project. Tracey was nominated by Karen Doughty, SJC.

CHESS Teams Collaborate at CCC for Workday Progress

The CHES member colleges came together on September 9-11, 2025, at Clovis Community College (CCC) for a successful CHES Workday Student onsite. Over 90 team members from across all CHES member colleges joined in person, with another 40 participating virtually to advance key project objectives. Organizational Change Management (OCM) led a dynamic half-day session allowing functional teams the opportunity to practice their Customer Confirmation Sessions (CCS) demonstrations. Functional workstreams began their demonstrations showing how student and staff tasks will appear in Workday, while technical workstreams concentrated on integrations and report development, featuring problem-solving and knowledge-sharing.



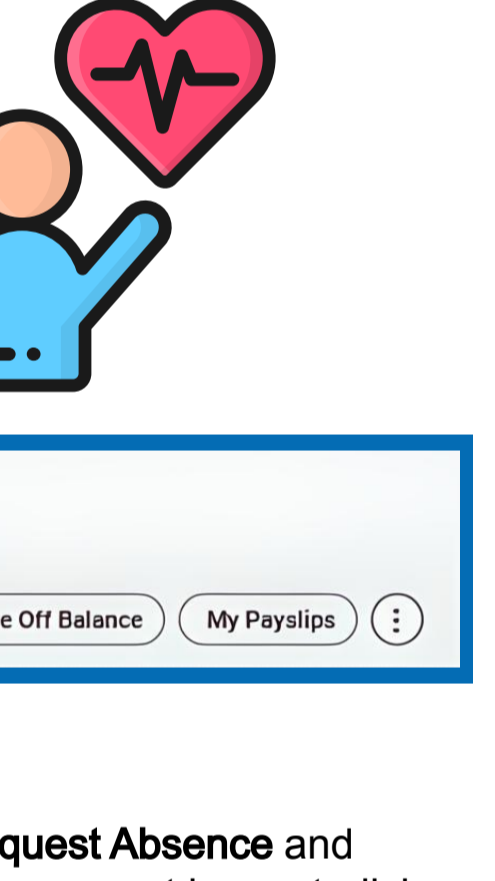
Dr. Jonathan Fuentes, Clovis Community College President, provides opening comments during day one of the onsite meeting.

In addition to these efforts, six teams shared "Wonders of Workday (WOW)" moments highlighting how SIS will positively transform the student experience and streamline staff processes. The first WOW Moment is below. Stay tuned for additional WOW Moments in upcoming CHES Connections!

Special thanks to the CCC team, whose outstanding hospitality and meticulous planning ensured the event's success!

WOW (Wonders of Workday) Moments

What an exciting week! During the CHES Workday Student onsite at Clovis Community College, moments of celebration energized and inspired the teams. Among the highlights were the "WOW Moments"—short for *Wonders of Workday*—which showcased the exciting capabilities and transformative potential of Workday Student, our new Student Information System (SIS).



CNM's Katharine Baggett, of the Student Core / Cross Functional workstream, shared an impactful "WOW Moment" that is paving the way for the transformation of the student experience.

Katharine shared examples of engagements, communications that guide the student's journey, and how Workday Student will allow each CHES member college to personalize their own templates that include borders, graphics, and "Call to Action" steps. In addition, Katharine shared about engagement plans and how they can be configured from daily to yearly depending on needs. Also, Katharine shared how engagements will allow staff to create audience groups without needing to rely on advanced coding skills and view estimated audiences to ensure that numbers and populations are correct.



Workday Release News from CHES ESS

Workday Release (2025R2) Updates Are Now Live!

Workday Release Updates Are Now Live!

The CHES ESS and Training Teams reviewed more than 400 system updates to identify configuration, testing, and training impacts. These updates have now been completed, deployed, and communicated with many of those system changes.

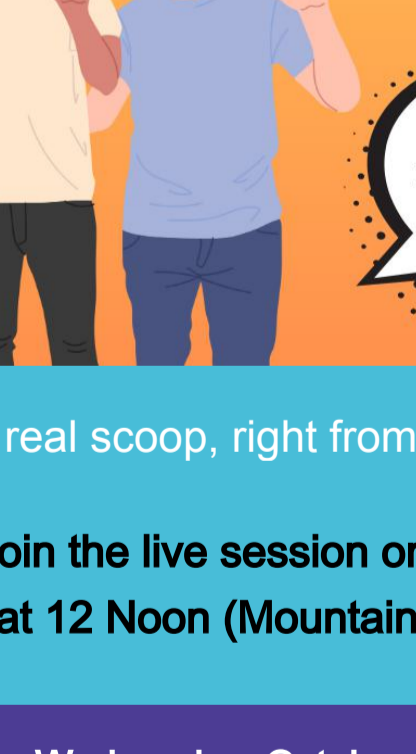
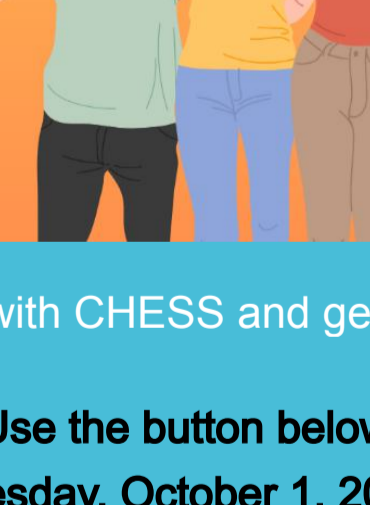
Profile Update:

To provide a more modern experience, Workday updated the visual styling and layout of user profile pages on the web. This change creates a cleaner and more intuitive presentation of profile information.

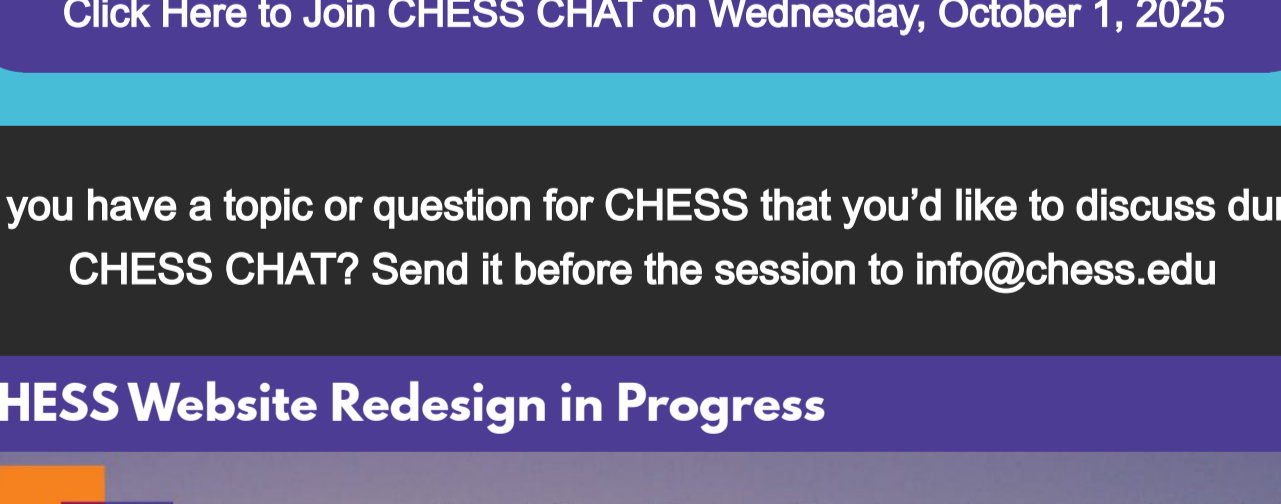
Quick Actions:

Workday replaced Quick Tasks with Quick Actions on Home feature. Users can now quickly access tasks by simply clicking on them, making the Workday experience more streamlined and user-friendly.

Old View

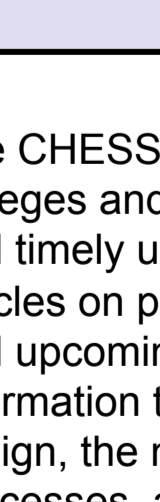


New View

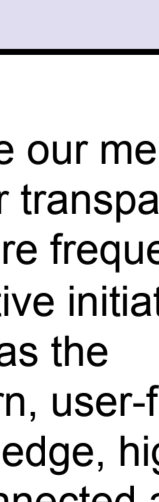


Absence Experience:

The new Absence experience is now live. **Request Absence** and **Manage Absence** tasks simplify absence management by centralizing functionalities, improving navigation, and introducing new ways to request and manage time off within Workday. The redesign of the Absence Calendar provides a streamlined experience when performing these tasks. Check out the [CHES Glossary](#) for the latest definitions on Manage and Request Absence.



TRAINING INFORMATION



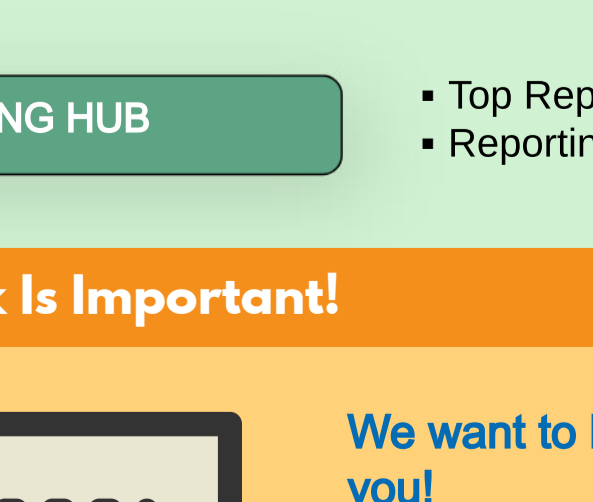
Self-paced training is now available in Workday Learning:

[Navigating the Absence Experience for Employees](#) audience includes all Staff and Faculty. (Approximately 15 minutes)

[Navigating the Absence Experience for Managers](#) audience includes all Managers who supervise Staff and Faculty. (Approximately 30 minutes)

The associated tip sheets related to Absence have been updated to reflect the latest information. For details and access to these resources, please visit [CHES.edu](#).

Welcome to the CHES Team!



A huge welcome to **Bettina Baca!** CHES Senior Program Manager, Marcos Garcia stated, "Thrilled to have you with us. Your work as **Testing Coordinator** is so crucial, and we're all here to support you. Can't wait to collaborate!"

Workday ERP News: Open Enrollment in Workday is On the Way!

Next month, all CHES member college employees will utilize the self-service option in Workday for **Benefits Open Enrollment**. While some requests will require additional supporting documents, many changes will not require any paperwork at all!

- REVIEWED**
 - Dental**
Delta Dental
- UPDATED**
 - Medical**
Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Vision**
Davis Vision

As part of Open Enrollment, benefits-eligible employees will have a note in their Workday "My Tasks" titled "Change Benefits for Open Enrollment." Clicking the "Let's Get Started" button will take employees to the enrollment screen where current benefits coverages and their costs can be viewed and desired changes can be made.

Any questions should be directed to the Benefits office at your college.

In support of this year's Open Enrollment Period and other needs, employees can access Tip Sheets from the Training Hub at CHES.edu.

Visit [CHES.edu](#) for tip sheets available in multiple languages to assist.

Join Us for CHES CHAT with Shaun McAlmont, CHES CEO

Come chat with CHES and get the real scoop, right from the source.

Use the button below to join the live session on **Wednesday, October 1, 2025, at 12 Noon (Mountain Time)**

[Click Here to Join CHES CHAT on Wednesday, October 1, 2025](#)

Do you have a topic or question for CHES that you'd like to discuss during CHES CHAT? Send it before the session to info@ches.edu

CHESS Website Redesign in Progress

The CHES website is getting a facelift to better serve our member colleges and community by providing a central hub for transparency and timely updates. The refreshed site will feature more frequent articles on product news, legislative issues, collaborative initiatives, and upcoming product releases, ensuring everyone has the information they need at their fingertips. With a modern, user-friendly design, the new site will make it easier to share knowledge, highlight successes, and keep our collaborative community connected and informed as we continue advancing our mission, "Mission: All Together".

For now, check out the newly added feature articles located at the bottom of the home page, as well as the new footer with a contact form. We're excited to be improving the site—thanks for your patience as we make it better for everyone!

[Click this button to explore the updates to the CHES website](#)

Quick Access to the Technology Support Hub

The **Technology Support Hub** is located within the Member Hub on the CHES website. The pull-down menus will quickly get you to the right information. Use the buttons below to get the information you need most!

SERVICE REQUEST HUB

- Create a New Service Request Ticket
- Follow Up on a Service Request

TENANT INFORMATION HUB

- Top Reports by Functional Area
- Reporting Tips & Tricks

REPORTING HUB

Your Feedback Is Important!

We want to hear from you—yes, you!

Whether you've got brilliant ideas, helpful suggestions, or just want to give CHESSTER the Squirrel a virtual high-five, this is your chance to speak up. Your feedback helps us make CHES even better for everyone. So go nuts and drop us a line—CHESSTER's all ears (and tail)!

[CLICK HERE TO LEAVE FEEDBACK](#)

Contact CHES

Do you have any questions? Do you have suggestions for new stories?

CONTACT:

Karen Grandinetti
CHES Communications
karen.grandinetti@ches.edu

The *CHES Connection* provides news about CHES and our Workday Enterprise Resource Planning and Student Information System projects. Please feel free to share.

CHES, the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services, is a nonprofit comprised of member colleges that employs a unique approach to transform the student experience and streamline administrative operations through state-of-the-art technologies. *Mission: All Together* is the CHES initiative to launch Workday.