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Del Mar College Foundation's annual scholarship dinner brought more than 600 donors and recipients face-to-face to share stories and successes on Oct. 15

Featured guest speaker, DMC alumnus and internationally acclaimed performing arts influencer Lalo Davila shared his success as inspiration for those attending the dinner; event recognized and celebrated the impact that over \$3 million in scholarships is now making for more than 1,400 recipients attending DMC during the 2026-2027 academic year

(Corpus Christi, Texas) – The scholarship dinner not only recognized donors' generosity but also celebrated the impact they have by supporting students through scholarships. And more than 600 donors and recipients attended the Del Mar College (DMC) Foundation's annual event on Oct. 15 to share stories and successes as students thanked their benefactors for believing in their dreams.

"When a donor and a student sit down together, the impact of a scholarship becomes personal," says Matthew Busby, Vice President of Development and Donor Advising and the Executive Director of the DMC Foundation. "Donors hear about the goals their generosity is helping students pursue, and students meet the people who are investing in their success. That connection is what makes this evening so meaningful."

Dr. Mark Escamilla, DMC President and CEO, added, "Every student who comes to Del Mar College has a dream for their future, and it's our responsibility to get them there. Our scholarship donors are an important part of that journey, creating opportunities for students to achieve their goals and build a better future for themselves and their families."

This year, the scholarship dinner was held at the Ortiz International Center with participation growing annually. And in part, that growth indicates the need for financial assistance among students pursuing their education at Del Mar College.

For the 2026-2027 academic year, the DMC Foundation currently has awarded over \$3 million to more than 1,400 students. These students represent 115 programs offered by the College, preparing them with the skills and knowledge needed to meet current workforce demands or providing a foundation for transfer to pursue further education.

Busby noted, "I'm happy to celebrate a record year of scholarship support with more than 1,400 students receiving awards while recognizing the big opportunity we have to help more people in our community. Scholarship support can help open the door for people to pursue their education and improve their future."

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DEL MAR COLLEGE

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Over \$3 million distributed and impacting more than 1,400 students

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During the dinner, donors and scholarship recipients also heard about the success story of DMC alumnus [Lalo Davila](#), who has built an internationally recognized career in both higher education and the performing arts.

Davila attended Del Mar College as a Music major from 1975 to 1979 before earning a Bachelor of Music degree from what is now Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. He then earned a Master of Music Education from the University of North Texas.

Now spanning nearly four decades, Davila's career as a percussionist and composer also includes his work as an educator and music professor at Middle Tennessee State University, where he has influenced students and colleagues alike.

A few of his top career credits include:

- touring and recording with artists who include Grammy-nominated Kirk Whalum, Arturo Sandoval, Allen Vizzutti, Clay Walker and others.
- lending his musicianship and voice to stage productions, films, television and video games, including Disney's *Aladdin: Dual Language Edition*, *The Equalizer*, *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and *Call of Duty: Black Ops III*.
- composing original television scores for *Breaking Bad*, *Burn Notice*, *Drop Dead Diva* and *Prison Break*.
- writing more than 50 compositions and 10 instructional books used worldwide among percussion programs.
- earning honors that include Nashville's 1998 Top Five Percussionist of the Year Award and the Nashville Scene's 2012 Best Latin Jazz Musician recognition.

"Del Mar College provided me with an incredible education," Davila said of his time at the College. "My professors instilled in me the importance of hard work, determination and dedication towards pursuing my passion as a performer and educator. Del Mar is more than a college; it's a home."

Davila's career reflects a lasting influence as an educator and artist. And he's a proud DMC alumnus who shared his story during the dinner to inspire this year's scholarship dinner participants to follow their dreams as he did.

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